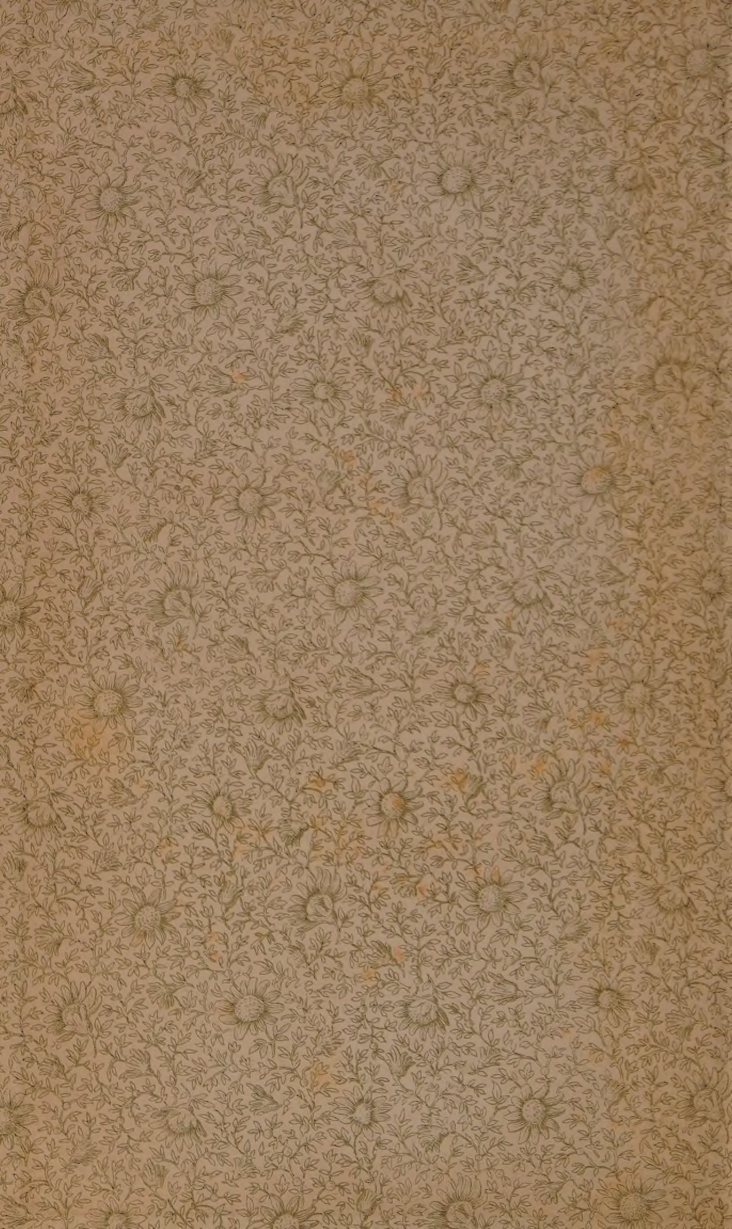
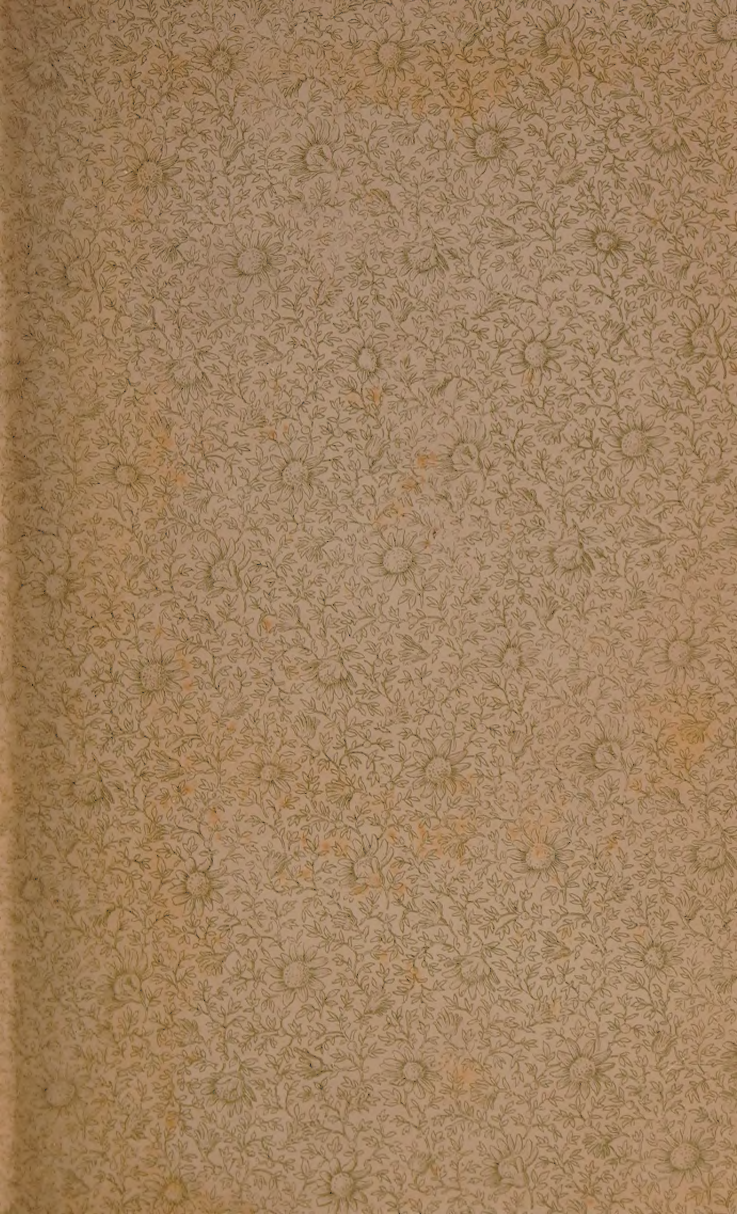


BOOK-SONG

GLEESON WHITE









The Book-Lover's Library

Edited by

Henry B. Wheatley, F.S.A.

BOOK-SONG

AN

ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS OF BOOKS AND
BOOKMEN FROM MODERN AUTHORS

EDITED BY

GLEESON WHITE

*Editor of "Ballades and Rondeaux," "Garde Joyeuse,"
etc., etc.*



NEW YORK

A. C. ARMSTRONG & SON, 714 BROADWAY

1893

TO
RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

*Five years ago a promise lightly made
Is claimed herein, as with a doubting pen
I dedicate this sheaf of verse which then
You bade me gather. But I, half afraid,
Dallied, and loitered, and long while delayed ;
Now Time has brought new idols to our ken,
Anthologies no longer charm as when
A lustrum since this garnering you bade.
The English rose of song is not less sweet ;
The petals borne from England oversea
Delight us still ; but pulses slower beat
To books than Life ; that volume which to me,
Though torn and dog-eared, sadly incomplete,
Holds one bright chapter headed "Memory."*

G. W.



PREFACE.

IT is not easy to discuss that love for books, which in some men is indeed wonderful passing the love of women, without quoting Charles Lamb. For he is of all later classics the ideal book-lover; one who adores not only their mental but their physical beauty: no mere æsthetic admirer, content to "worship from afar with distant reverence"; but one who must fondle his treasures. To gaze mutely, with a satisfied joy in being near enough to caress and abstain, is the secret of this type of book-lover, who must also be a reader and a student. Did not "Elia" wish to ask a grace before reading more than a grace before dinner? Now-a-days we are apt to forget either salutation; yet the thrill of pleasure an old favourite or a much-longed-for new book inspires, at times bursts into song. Your

lover has a habit of dropping into rhyme in a way which oftentimes, to be quite honest, does more credit to his devotion than to his culture ; even with a facile writer bathos waits nearer than pathos. The few eternal verities come with fatal ease ; and, vivid as they may be to the rhymers, fall somewhat tamely on a listener's ear. Therefore it would be rash to declare that all poems about books are worthy of their subject. Of course it may be urged that genuine emotion when too deeply felt ignores the self-criticism which mere artifice accepts gladly. But art has nothing to do with what the poet really felt ; whether he awakens the same feeling in his reader is the question. If forced to be so ungracious as to criticise a large class of bookish verse, one might own the evident sincerity of the singers, and yet wish at times that their very fervid praise had been more cautiously uttered. To dilate upon perfection is singularly non-exhilarating. "Too much chatter about books," according to Mr. Frederic Harrison, "chokes the seed which is sown in the greatest books of the world." We have been told that "lips sing

but when they cannot kiss." But this hardly holds true of bibliophiles, who might easily suppress the imminent poem were it not that the energy required to suppress a sonnet seems the hardest effort to-day. The sight of his beloved volumes brings to a poet's mind so many memories of joys tasted in secret, of wealth amassed in his treasure-house, that he is moved to a recital which shall provoke the sympathy—or envy—of his fellows.

This passion, acting on very different natures, is apt to excite very similar utterance. For instance, expressions of delight in the pleasure of possession, apart from the pleasure of study, might be quoted from Horace, or the ancients, or the latest rhymers. Richard de Bury, Montaigne, and the great cloud of witnesses Mr. Alexander Ireland gathers together in his "Book-Lover's Enchiridion," need but to be named in passing as proof of this well-nigh universal habit of joying in the ownership of the "dead bodies with living souls," those immortals who remain always to mould the destinies of men, though creeds are forgotten and the gods themselves are dead.

Herein the classics both of our own country and foreign lands are left unquoted. To not a few people to-day—as indeed probably at any period—the voice of a contemporary has a certain charm no classic writer can offer. One may note such a taste without defence or apology, recognising that it is not unfit that the ephemeral trifles of the hour should enjoy their brief share of applause. To know the great ones of that past which is still the present, and to have communion with the “mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies skilled to sing of Time and Eternity,” holds nobler pleasures ; but those who have learnt the speech of the gods need not, swelling with pride, look down too severely on lesser mortals. That the colloquialism of their own time is the only utterance worth regarding, is an attitude more common than people generally care to admit ; and is especially the mood of a large class to-day. At times a stirring soldier-jingle by the creator of Tommy Atkins—or, with bated breath be it whispered, a Macaulay “Lay”—affects us more than “Lycidas,” or “The Sick King of Bokhara.” In most

cases sympathy with the subject attracts greater crowds than any triumph of art with a theme above them or outside their limit. So the angler will enjoy books on fishing, that would have been unspeakable to Dr. Johnson ; a soldier will find delight in accounts of old battles, tedious and entirely devoid of the excitement of war as your civilian imagines it ; possibly the book-lover may find praise of his idols vital and satisfying, even when lisped by faltering tongues. Yet at times poets—the unmistakable singers who move all hearts by their song—have found in books, as books, a worthy theme. It would be infelicitous to point out any poems in this collection to prove this statement ; but when several come to mind, the doubt will arise whether by their side any mere verses, however graceful, should be permitted to elbow their betters ; yet a catholic anthology must needs allow for wide variance in taste.

Here the anthologist has not endeavoured to include longer poems wherein a book is casually mentioned—nor, after the manner of the excellent Mr. Dodd in his “ Beauties of

Shakespeare," to tear out isolated passages that fit his subject. Nor, since another hand is working on similar lines in older fields, has he ventured to include a single verse by an earlier—and hardly one by a dead—singer. The difference between the treatment of the subject by older lovers and those of to-day is more than mere fashion of phrase or choice of epithet. It seemed to be incumbent on the ancient swains to express their adoration with a fine courtesy that, stilted as it may sound compared with the easy, careless sentence of the hour—at least makes you feel the poet was very anxious to preserve his own dignity notwithstanding his pretended abasement. To be reverent and at the same time intimate is possibly difficult, but it is certainly the modern mood, and without exalting either school, it is easy to enjoy the servile adulation and grave deportment of the older poet, and yet admire the flippant or sentimental passion which inspires many a modern singer.

Naturally, were one hindered by no restraint, Mr. Andrew Lang would be one represented far more fully here: his felicitous

lyrics on the Rowfant Books, his raptures over Aldines, Boldonis and Elzevirs, his dirge on the fourpenny box—

“ And the tomes where divinity prances,
And the pamphlets where Heretics roar,”

are regretfully omitted ; so, too, it was found impossible to include his cynically apologetic ballade—

“ Here’s Carlyle shrieking ‘ woe on woe,’
(The first edition this he wailed in) ;
I once believed in him—but oh, ————
The many things I’ve tried and failed in !”

that so paradoxically touches on not a few of his many hobbies. But the chairman at a banquet should hesitate before expressing too deep regrets for absent guests, lest those present should feel the interest is being transferred to the others who have shirked the ordeal. So the rest of the noteworthy absentees were best left unnamed, but not unregretted, and by no means overlooked or wilfully slighted.

Poems to “my books,” in common with poems to “my mother,” are strangely alike in the thing said, however varied may be

the saying it. Friends that never tire, that can be scorned or dallied with, is an idea that recurs constantly. Raptures over rare editions, pæans on rare bindings, threnodies on forgotten masterpieces, form the staple themes of another, and as a rule a more neatly finished, class of verses. To find one's own ideas set forth in a new manner is the crowning delight to many readers. So, perhaps, we should not depreciate a number of poems on special volumes ; although, with some splendid exceptions, which it would be invidious to name, they are apt to reflect the rather commonplace bliss of their owners rapture. On the whole, those which treat of the externals are more satisfactory than those which consider them as literature. At times the pride of ownership becomes a little irritating, and seems deliberately worded to provoke jealousy ; but on second thoughts we remember the licence of a poet does not debar his imaginary possession of a few first folios, Aldines and Elzevirs, purely for the sake of the rhyme, or the sweet consonance of their syllables.

To apologise for a new anthology is but

one degree less sensible than to prepare it. Only those who have done so can realise the dismay at finding the quotation of some of their favourites forbidden by the owner of the copyright; and, if the truth may be said, at finding also that certain things dainty or charming in their original setting have, like too many a picture in a gallery, failed to preserve the effect which in the studio made them distinctly admirable. This, of course, must be attributed to the setting, and not to the jewel. A pearl of great price may lose part of its beauty between common crystals, sparkling in a way, but lacking the fire of the precious stone; on the other hand, a gem that in the pages of a periodical flashed out with a really brilliant polish, torn from its setting seems a thing of paste mechanically fashioned. Yet to apologise for an anthology might be pardonable in one way; for is not life spent in making collections to one's own taste—of friends—of opinions—of facts—and possibly of enemies? We all criticise our neighbours' anthologies; and at times our own, edited, as we would fain believe, with so much care and judg-

ment, and yet with so many mistakes and errors, whether lives or volumes of verse.

The appearance of this book, in spite of a collection of a similar nature being already in the field, needs a word of explanation. It was well nigh ready for press just before Mr. Andrew Lang and Mr. Brander Matthews issued their "Ballads of Books"; hence its delay, hence too the regretted loss of many contributions from one of those admirable editors who touches all things so lightly and delightfully, that even a severe criticism on one's own ruder efforts becomes almost pleasant reading. Whether such a collection is ever desirable cannot obviously be discussed here with impartiality, because probably no one hates an anthology so viciously as he who has just failed in that attempt to make an ideal one which is inevitable to the task.

Very sincere thanks are due to a fellow-worker, Mr. William Roberts, who at the same time was preparing a volume of poems about books. He has generously contributed to this all the modern rhymes he had already selected; and in return the golden numbers

of past times that were to be herein have been handed over to him for a collection of earlier poetry on the same subject, which is to be its companion. It remains only to thank most cordially those authors, editors and publishers who have permitted quotation here. If, as must happen in matter collected from periodicals, including a quantity published in the United States, some items are wrongly ascribed, or some copyrights unintentionally ignored, the editor's most sincere apologies are offered. His chief fear is that permission asked and granted, in some cases so long ago as five years, may have faded from the givers' minds, although fresh still in that of the recipient. Why authors should almost invariably not merely give ready consent, but take no little trouble in the matter, is less easy to explain than to appreciate. But, as probably most editors of similar collections know, the sympathy and help from men whose time is most jealously guarded, turns what would otherwise be an arduous task to something that might almost be called a pastime, did not the etymology of that word recall the hours of proof

reading and of that "collation" which is by no means a slight repast, as the dictionary avers. Especial thanks must be given to Mr. Lewis Carroll, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, Dr. John Todhunter, Mr. A. C. Swinburne, Mr. Theodore Watts, Mr. Oscar Wilde, and others, for their courtesy and the interest they betrayed in the collection.

A last word of recognition is due to the various publishers who have so kindly endorsed the authors' permission to reprint the various numbers quoted herein ; among whom must be specially noted Messrs. Thacker & Co., the publishers of *Cherry Stones*, by Greece C. Dutt ; Messrs. Sonnenschein & Co., the publishers of *Minora Carmina*, by the late C. C. Rhys ; the editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, for "Reading" ; the editor of the *Cambridge Review*, for "A Plea for the Burial of Paley," and "Why cannot I Read To-night ?" and many others, whose general consent has been so gracefully accorded.

GLEESON WHITE.

9, S. PETER'S SQUARE, W.



FRIAR JEROME'S BEAUTIFUL BOOK.

A.D. 1200.

THE Friar Jerome, for some slight sin
Done in his youth, was struck with woe.
“When I am dead,” quoth Friar Jerome,
“Surely, I think my soul will go
Shuddering through the darkened spheres,
Down to eternal fires below !
I shall not dare from that dread place
To lift mine eyes to Jesus’ face,
Nor Mary’s, as she sits adored
At the feet of Christ the Lord.
Alas ! December’s all too brief
For me to hope to wipe away
The memory of my sinful May !”
And Friar Jerome was full of grief
That April evening, as he lay
On the straw pallet in his cell.
He scarcely heard the curfew-bell
Calling the brotherhood to prayer ;
But he arose, for ’twas his care

Nightly to feed the hungry poor
That crowded to the Convent door.

His choicest duty it had been :
But this one night it weighed him down.
“What work for an immortal soul,
To feed and clothe some lazy clown !
Is there no action worth my mood,
No deed of daring, high and pure,
That shall, when I am dead, endure,
A well-spring of perpetual good ?”

And straight he thought of those great tomes
With clamps of gold—the Convent’s boast—
How they endured, while kings and realms
Past into darkness and were lost ;
How they had stood from age to age,
Clad in their yellow vellum-mail,
’Gainst which the Paynim’s godless rage,
The Vandal’s fire, could naught avail :
Though heathen sword-blows fell like hail,
Though cities ran with Christian blood,
Imperishable they had stood !
They did not seem like books to him,
But Heroes, Martyrs, Saints—their selves
The things they told of, not mere books
Ranged grimly on the oaken shelves.

To those dim alcoves, far withdrawn,
He turned with measured steps and slow,
Trimming his lantern as he went ;
And there, among the shadows, bent

Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book. 3

Above one ponderous folio,
With whose miraculous text were blent
Seraphic faces : Angels, crowned
With rings of melting amethyst ;
Mute, patient Martyrs, cruelly bound
To blazing fagots ; here and there,
Some bold, serene Evangelist,
Or Mary in her sunny hair ;
And here and there from out the words
A brilliant tropic bird took flight ;
And through the margins many a vine
Went wandering—roses, red and white,
Tulip, wind-flower, and columbine
Blossomed. To his believing mind
These things were real, and the wind,
Blown through the mullioned window, took
Scent from the lilies in the book.

“ Santa Maria ! ” cried Friar Jerome,
“ Whatever man illumined this,
Though he were steeped heart-deep in sin,
Was worthy of unending bliss,
And no doubt hath it ! Ah ! dear Lord,
Might I so beautify Thy Word !
What sacristan, the convents through,
Transcribes with such precision ? who
Does such initials as I do ?
Lo ! I will gird me to this work,
And save me, ere the one chance slips.
On smooth, clean parchment I'll engross
The Prophet's fell Apocalypse ;

And as I write from day to day,
Perchance my sins will pass away."

So Friar Jerome began his Book.
From break of dawn till curfew-chime
He bent above the lengthening page,
Like some rapt poet o'er his rhyme.
He scarcely paused to tell his beads,
Except at night ; and then he lay
And tost, unrestful, on the straw,
Impatient for the coming day—
Working like one who feels, perchance,
That, ere the longed-for goal be won,
Ere Beauty bare her perfect breast,
Black Death may pluck him from the sun.
At intervals the busy brook,
Turning the mill-wheel, caught his ear ;
And through the grating of the cell
He saw the honeysuckles peer,
And knew 'twas summer, that the sheep
In fragrant pastures lay asleep,
And felt that, somehow, God was near.
In his green pulpit on the elm,
The robin, abbot of that wood,
Held forth by times ; and Friar Jerome
Listened, and smiled, and understood.

While summer wrapt the blissful land
What joy it was to labour so,
To see the long-tressed Angels grow
Beneath the cunning of his hand,
Vignette and tail-piece subtly wrought !
And little recked he of the poor

Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book. 5

That missed him at the Convent door ;
Or, thinking of them, put the thought
Aside. " I feed the souls of men
Henceforth, and not their bodies ! "—yet
Their sharp, pinched features, now and then,
Stole in between him and his Book,
And filled him with a vague regret.

Now on that region fell a blight :
The corn grew cankered in its sheath ;
And from the verdurous uplands rolled
A sultry vapour fraught with death—
A poisonous mist, that, like a pall,
Hung black and stagnant over all.
Then came the sickness—the malign,
Green-spotted terror called the Pest,
That took the light from loving eyes,
And made the young bride's gentle breast
A fatal pillow. Ah ! the woe,
The crime, the madness that befell !
In one short night that vale became
More foul than Dante's inmost hell.
Men curst their wives ; and mothers left
Their nursing babes alone to die,
And wantoned, singing, through the streets,
With shameless brow and frenzied eye ;
And senseless clowns, not fearing God—
Such power the spotted fever had—
Razed Cragwood Castle on the hill,
Pillaged the wine-bins, and went mad.
And evermore that dreadful pall
Of mist hung stagnant over all :

By day, a sickly light broke through
The heated fog, on town and field ;
By night, the moon, in anger, turned
Against the earth its mottled shield.

Then from the Convent, two and two,
The Prior chanting at their head,
The monks went forth to shrive the sick,
And give the hungry grave its dead—
Only Jerome, he went not forth,
But hiding in his dusty nook,
“ Let come what will, I must illumine
The last ten pages of my Book ! ”
He drew his stool before the desk,
And sat him down, distraught and wan,
To paint his daring masterpiece,
The stately figure of Saint John.
He sketched the head with pious care,
Laid in the tint, when, powers of Grace !
He found a grinning Death's-head there,
And not the grand Apostle's face !

Then up he rose with one long cry :
“ 'Tis Satan's self does this,” cried he,
“ Because I shut and barred my heart
When Thou didst loudest call to me !
O Lord, Thou know'st the thoughts of men,
Thou know'st that I did yearn to make
Thy Word more lovely to the eyes
Of sinful souls, for Christ His sake !
Nathless, I leave the task undone :
I give up all to follow Thee—

Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book. 7

Even like him who gave his nets
To winds and waves by Galilee !”

Which said, he closed the precious Book
In silence, with a reverent hand ;
And drawing his cowl about his face
Went forth into the Stricken Land.
And there was joy in heaven that day—
More joy o’er this forlorn old friar
Than over fifty sinless men
Who never struggled with desire !

What deeds he did in that dark town,
What hearts he soothed with anguish torn,
What weary ways of woe he trod,
Are written in the Book of God,
And shall be read at Judgment Morn.
The weeks crept on, when, one still day,
God’s awful presence filled the sky,
And that black vapour floated by,
And lo ! the sickness past away.
With silvery clang, by thorpe and town,
The bells made merry in their spires :
O God ! to think the Pest is flown !
Men kissed each other on the street,
And music piped to dancing feet
The livelong night, by roaring fires !

Then Friar Jerome, a wasted shape—
For he had taken the Plague at last—
Rose up, and through the happy town,
And through the wintry woodlands, past

Into the Convent. What a gloom
Sat brooding in each desolate room
What silence in the corridor !
For of that long, innumerable train
Which issued forth a month before
Scarce twenty had come back again

Counting his rosary step by step,
With a forlorn and vacant air,
Like some unshriven churchyard thing,
The Friar crawled up the mouldy stair
To his damp cell, that he might look
Once more on his beloved Book.

And there it lay upon the stand,
Open !—he had not left it so.
He grasped it, with a cry ; for, lo !
He saw that some angelic hand,
While he was gone, had finished it !
There 'twas complete, as he had planned ;
There, at the end, stood *Finis*, writ
And gilded as no man could do—
Not even that pious anchoret,
Bilfrid, the wonderful, nor yet
The miniatore Ethelwold,
Nor Durham's Bishop, who of old
(England still hoards the priceless leaves)
Did the Four Gospels all in gold.
And Friar Jerome nor spoke nor stirred,
But, with his eyes fixed on that word,
He passed from sin and want and scorn,
And suddenly the chapel-bells
Rang in the holy Christmas-Morn !

In those wild wars which racked the land
Since then, and kingdoms rent in twain,
The Friar's Beautiful Book was lost—
That miracle of hand and brain :
Yet, though its leaves were torn and tost,
The volume was not writ in vain !

T. B. ALDRICH.



A BALLADE OF OLDE BOOKES.

THEY sing of the shadow-lands far away,
The meads and the valleys of Acadie :
Of haunts where the satyr and wood-nymph play ,
And of Pillars and Gates of Ivorie ;
But none of these pleasaunces seems to me
A haven of joy—for I'm growing old,
And crave of Dame Fortune that I may be
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.
I've haunted Brentano and John Delay,
And toyed with their stories of France so free,
At Putnams' and Scribners' from day to day
I've flirted with Saltus and Roe (E.P.) ;
But weary of all I have turned in glee
To Bouton's murk shelves with their wealth untold.
Yearning for Quaritch in Piccadilly
Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.
My pulses beat high and my heart is gay
At finding a date that begins MD—
On a sweet old 12mo whose leaves are grey
With booky " patina " of ancientrie ;

And I kneel to the sage come o'er the sea,
 That vandals may sell him for Yankee gold,
 And gladly I part with my hard-earned V,
 Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.

ENVOI.

Ah, Princess ! these glories shall live when we
 Are dead, and our life-blood has long run cold,
 For they are immortal—as you may see,
 Where the second-hand books are bought and sold.

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN.



A BALLAD OF AUTHORS AND BOOKS:

IN the coves of the Island of Treasure,
 On the tropical Beach of Falese,
 I have taken unlimited pleasure,
 Wafted there by a favouring breeze.
 I have lingered with Lang and his Bookmen,
 I have Gossiped the day long with Gosse,
 But have wearied of Stead and his spook-men,
 And have steadfastly wished for their loss.

I have studied Vanbrugh and Pinero,
 Ford and Webster, Kit Marlowe and Jones ;
 Whilst, to me, Oscar Wilde was a hero,
 With his wittily cynical tones :
 But, so long as "A Doll's House" the craze is,
 I am sure that the public might see,
 If they wish for a play that amazes,
 They can get one much better from me.

The Book I've Read Before. I I

I have shared in each joy and each sorrow
Of the garrulous "Warriors Three,"
I have travelled in Spain with George Borrow,
I have tasted the Autocrat's tea,
I have listened to Barrie's sweet "Thrumming,"
And enjoyed "Lady Windermere's Fan,"
But I think of the writer who's coming,
And I wonder if I am the man.

G. B.



THE BOOK I'VE READ BEFORE.

I HEAR of many a "latest book";
I note what zealous readers say;
Through columns critical I look,
With their decisive "yea" and "nay"!
At times I own I'm half inclined
O'er some new masterpiece to pore;
Yet in the end I always find
I choose the book I've read before!

Its well-known contents suit my taste,
I know what it is all about;
And so I never am in haste
To find "how it is coming out."
But quietly I wend my way:
O'er each familiar scene I pore—
The bright, the dark, the grave, the gay—
Of that old book I've read before.

Then worry not, my puzzled friend :
 I'm odd, I own ; and so while you
 Your way through countless volumes wend,
 Entranced with each, so "late" and "new,"
 Be not surprised that I, meanwhile,
 Avoiding new ones by the score,
 Full many a passing hour beguile
 With some old books I've read before !

And if, perchance, the hint you take
 To shun the new, and read the old ;
 And find, surprised, the change you make
 Reveals new beauties, all untold :
 'Twill surely duplicate my joy
 While o'er the old I fondly pore,
 When you with me find sweet employ
 In some old book we've read before.

CHARLES R. BALLARD.



AN UNCUT COPY.

WHEN I was young I sent my friend a copy
 of "My Verses,"
 And when he died he left his books to me, dear
 to his heart.
 To-day I looked them over all, and find—ten
 thousand curses !—
 My book is there, and no two leaves have e'er
 been cut apart.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

AN INCONSISTENCY.

THE bibliophile who loves his margins wide—
 Who grudges e'en to type an inch or two—
 Most strangely has not ever stepped aside
 To read with glee a virgin blank-book through.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



THE GRANGERITE.

HE says he's fond of books as of himself—
 This man who never yet has hesitated
 To hack and cut a dozen books for pelf
 Wherewith *one* may be extra-illustrated !

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



AN ALTERNATIVE.

THERE'S Byron on my shelf, and Shelley too ;
 There's dear old Doctor Holmes, and Thomas
 Moore,
 With Wordsworth just below him, bound in blue,
 And Browning's works stand over by the door.
 There's Milton, Scott, Macaulay's Lays of Rome ;
 There's Tennyson and Matthew Arnold terse ;
 Longfellow, Shakespeare, and Rossetti's tome ;
 The odes of Horace and blest Omar's verse.

So vast these riches are in my poor eyes,
 I can't decide which poet on my shelf
 I'll read to-night, and so I'll compromise
 And read these "Rhymes" in full calf by myself.

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.

PHILOSOPHIC OBSCURITY.

ESSAYS and novels and poems I've penned,
 Autobiographies, histories three,
 Jokelets and verses, and such without end,
 Letters of travel on land and on sea.

No one has seen them, and see them none may ;
 Locked in my closet the manuscripts lie,
 Sealed with instructions to fire the day,
 Distant or present, on which I die.

Fame I care naught for, and fortune is mine,
 Hence under lock and key let the lines rest.
 Why should I give the world one single line—
 World that has often neglected the best ?

Why should I drive them, offspring of my brain,
 Into the world with its critics severe ?
 Why should I seek for the woe and the pain
 Certain to follow the theorist's leer ?

No ! I will keep them : unread let them lie ;
 Then when I pass through Death's mystieried
 portal,

How 'twill console me, reflecting, that I
 Could, had I chosen, have been an immortal !

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



A LITERARY SOLUTION.

WE stood in the bookstore together,
 She chatting of this and of that ;
 My heart kept time with the feather
 That clung to her Gainsborough hat.

On Stevenson, Stockton and Kipling,
And poets galore she enthused ;
But how to propose to her, rippling
With music and laughter, I mused.

On this one and that one she tarried
To label their place on the shelf ;
This " How to be Happy, Though Married " :
" Absurd ! " and I thought so myself.
" But those who have tried it may surely
Be trusted to know," I replied.
" I tell you," she said, " it is purely
The tone of the age to deride."

" The task for solution," I ventured,
" Is how to be married, though poor"—
I know that I ought to be censured,
She looking so sweet and demure.
Her voice was so low, 'twas the border
Of thought where it breaks into word :
" We might," she said, " solve this, in order
To prove that the book is absurd."

CHARLES KNOWLES BOLTON.



TO AN OLD BOOK.

OLD book forlorn, compiled of ancient thought,
Now bought and sold, and once more sold
and bought,
At last left stranded, where in time I spied,
Borne thither by an impecunious tide ;

Well thumb'd, stain-mark'd, but new and dear to
me,

My purse and thy condition well agree.

I saw thee, yearned, then took thee to my arms,
For fellowship in misery has charms.

How long, I know not, thou hadst lain unscanned,
Thy mellow leaves untouched by loving hand—

For there thou wast beneath a dusty heap,

Unknown. I raised thee, therefore let me reap

A harvest from thy treasures. Thee I found—

Yea, thee I'll cherish ; though new friends abound,
I'll still preserve thee as the years go round.

EDGAR GREENLEAF BRADFORD.



THE BIBLIOPHILE.

THE lover may rave of his ruddy-cheeked lass,
The sailor may sing of the sea ;

And toppers may tell of the charms of the glass,
But Books have more beauty for me.

A book is a treasure more precious than gold ;

An heirloom bequeathed to mankind ;

A casket of wisdom in which we behold

The kingliest gems of the mind.

Though humble my lot, yet dull care I defy,

With books for my gentle allies ;

And folly and vice from my presence will fly

When I think of the good and the wise.

My books shall supply me with balm for each blow,
When fortune my best effort spurns ;
With Swift I will laugh at the high and the low,
And mourn o'er a "mousie" with Burns.

While sitting at ease by my own fireside,
A famous old Book on my knee,
A lover alone with his beautiful bride
Would win little envy from me.

My heart feels at peace as through Book-world I
roam,
The fair realms of fancy are mine,
And Love's holy spirit now rests on my home—
My book is the Volume Divine.

ALFRED C. BRANT.



A BOOKWORM.

TIME-EATEN, like his books, and worn
With teen and strong endeavour,
Pure heart, flame burning ever,
Whence lofty thought and verse were born,
With lamp-lit toil he met the morn.

And wealth bequeathed by ages old
Stood round him piled, enshelved,
Wherein he nightly delved,
Nor paused when grey was smitten gold,
Nor shuddered though the morn blew cold.

The Past was servitor to him ;
His genius robed in learning,
His wages fame for earning,—
Fame seen afar, with eyeballs dim,
Fame cheaply bought by life or limb.

Yet men who dig for gold despise
Those lean hands godless delving,
That patience slow uphelving
Mysterious glories for their eyes,
Who sneering deem his prize no prize.

They, perched on money-bags, supreme,
Behold him but with scorning,
Grip gold all night ; the morning
Breaks with a chill, sarcastic gleam
The pelf and profits of their dream.

Sleek fed they travel towards their end,
Their joys gold-built, their troubles,
The wreck of gilded bubbles.
In sight of that towards which we tend
They crawl to wealth, for heirs to spend.

But he, sad-eyed and ashy-cheeked,
When slips the pen from grasping,
Sees, as he struggles, gasping,
With fame the far horizon streaked
Behind Death's raven gory-beaked.

Last, when, his final task complete,
He sat, sat as he perished,
Amid the love he cherished,
They say who pierced his lone retreat
That angel pinions swept their feet.

A beauteous fabric perfect wrought,
His days were spent in framing,
Lives, blooms to utter shaming
The fools who spurned his toil, and thought
Fame, like their Consols, might be bought.

Sad reverent steps and hearts are ours,
When to his tablet bringing
Grief, awe, and love upspringing,
And little care we, scattering flowers,
Where riches' gilded obelisk towers.

J. J. BRITTON.



THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S ASSIGNMENT OF
BINDERS.

IF I could bring the dead to-day,
I would your soul with wonder fill
By pointing out a novel way
For bibliopegistic skill.

My Walton, Trautz should take in hand,
Or else I'd give him o'er to Hering ;
Matthews should make the Gospels stand
A dateless warning to the erring.

The history of the Inquisition,
With all its diabolic train
Of cruelty and superstition,
Should fitly be arrayed by Payne.

A book of dreams by Bedford clad,
A papal history by De Rome,
Should make the sense of fitness glad
In every bibliomaniac's home.

As our first mother's folly cost
Her sex so dear, and makes men grieve,
So Milton's plaint of Eden lost
Would be appropriate for Eve.

Hayday would make "One summer" be
Much more attractive to the view ;
While General Wolfe's biography
Should be the work of Pасdeloup.

For lives of dwarfs like Thomas Thumb
Petit's the man by Nature made,
And when Munchausen strikes us dumb
It is by means of Gascon aid.

Thus would I the great binders blend
In harmony with work before 'em,
And so Rivière I would commend
To Turner's "Liber Fluviorum."

IRVING BROWNE.

HOW A BIBLIOMANIAC BINDS HIS BOOKS.

I'D like my favourite books to bind
 So that their outward dress
 To every bibliomaniac's mind
 Their contents should express.

Napoleon's life should glare in red,
 John Calvin's life in blue ;
 Thus they would typify bloodshed
 And sour religion's hue.

The prize-ring record of the past
 Must be in blue and black ;
 While any colour that is fast
 Would do for Derby track.

The Popes in scarlet well may go ;
 In jealous green, Othello ;
 In grey, Old Age of Cicero,
 And London Cries in yellow.

My Walton should his gentle art
 In salmon best express,
 And Penn and Fox the friendly heart
 In quiet drab confess.

Statistics of the lumber trade
 Should be embraced in boards,
 While muslin for the inspired Maid
 A fitting garb affords.

Intestine wars I'd clothe in vellum,
 While pig-skin Bacon grasps,
 And flat romances such as "Pelham"
 Should stand in calf with clasps.

Blind-tooled should be blank verse and rhyme
 And prose of epic Milton ;
 But Newgate Calendar of Crime
 I'd lavishly dab gilt on.

The edges of a sculptor's life
 May fitly marbled be,
 But sprinkle not, for fear of strife,
 A Baptist history.

Crimea's warlike facts and dates
 Of fragrant Russia smell ;
 The subjugated Barbary States
 In crushed Morocco dwell.

But oh ! that one I hold so dear
 Should be arrayed so cheap
 Gives me a qualm ; I sadly fear
 My Lamb must be half-sheep !

IRVING BROWNE.



THE BOOKWORM DOES NOT CARE FOR
 NATURE.

I FEEL no need of nature's flowers—
 Of flowers of rhetoric I have store ;
 I do not miss the balmy showers—
 When books are dry I o'er them pore.

Why should I sit upon a stile
And cause my aged bones to ache,
When I can all the hours beguile
With any style that I would take?

Why should I haunt a purling stream,
Or fish in miasmatic brook?
O'er Euclid's angles I can dream,
And recreation find in Hook.

Why should I jolt upon a horse
And after wretched vermin roam,
When I can choose an easier course
With Fox and Hare and Hunt at home?

What if some vicious bull were loose,
Or fractious cow pursue my path?
A tamer Bulwer I would choose,
A Cowper destitute of wrath.

Why should I watch the swallows flit,
And run the risk of butting ram?
A Swift upon my shelves Hazlitt,
I need not run from waggish Lamb.

Why should I scratch my precious skin
By crawling through a hawthorn hedge,
When Hawthorne, raking up my sin,
Stands tempting on the nearest ledge?

No need that I should take the trouble
To go abroad to walk or ride,
For I can sit at home and double
Quite up with pain from Akenside.

IRVING BROWNE.

A LESSON IN LATIN.

OUR Latin books, in motley row,
 Invite us to the task—
 Gay Horace, stately Cicero ;
 Yet there's one verb, when once we know,
 No higher skill we ask :
 This ranks all other lore above—
 We've learned "amare" means "to love !"
 So hour by hour, from flower to flower,
 We sip the sweets of life ;
 Till, ah ! too soon the clouds arise,
 And knitted brows and angry eyes
 Proclaim the dawn of strife.
 With half a smile and half a sigh,
 "Amare ! Bitter One !" we cry.
 Last night we owned, with looks forlorn,
 "Too well the scholar knows
 There is no rose without a thorn—"
 But peace is made ! We sing, this morn,
 "No thorn without a rose !"
 Our Latin lesson is complete ;
 We've learned that Love is "Bitter-sweet !"

LEWIS CARROLL.



TO A BOOKWORM.

THOU patient grub, that through this volume
 old
 Thy labyrinthine way hast bored—
 Not for the wealth of wisdom stored
 Between its oaken lids—not for the bold

And soaring rancy—not or the gold
 Of human sympathy outpoured,
 Like treasures from some secret hoard,
 Upon its ample pages stained with mould :
 Ah no ! a baser appetite was thine ;
 Yet in the scope of nature's plan
 Thy purpose thou hast served ; the man
 Who built this noble volume line by line,
 Served but the same—no more—in his degree ;
 Divine the hand in both alike I see.

T. J. CHAPMAN.



MY BOOKS.

MY books—a ragged lot are they,
 Like Falstaff's men at Shrewsbury—
 A sight to make a critic merry !
 And yet to me each dingy book
 Appeals with such a friendly look,
 To part with them I shall not hurry.
 My Goldsmith's muslin coat is torn ;
 My Boswell I have clothed in cotton ;
 Old Samuel's leather suit is rotten ;
 Macaulay's page is marked with grime
 Beyond my power to tell in rhyme,—
 Perhaps it *might* be Hottentot in.
 I've read Sir Walter to the core,—
 His volumes now are somewhat tattered ;
 My Shakspeare too is somewhat battered ;
 My poets all—Burns, Byron, Keats,
 Poe, Coleridge—I have sucked their sweets
 And left the calyx somewhat shattered.

A double preciousness to me
 Do these old dingy books discover ;
 As hawthorn tree reminds the lover
 Of pleasant hours long passed away,
 When here he sat with darling May,
 While shone the evening star above her ;

Even so the sight of these old books
 My oft-despondent heart rejoices ;
 I hear again long-silent voices ;
 The quiet nook, the grassy lane,
 The shining stream I see again,
 While white-winged peace above me poises.

T. J. CHAPMAN.



OLD BOOKS ARE BEST.

OLD Books are best ! With what delight
 Does "Faithorne fecit" greet our sight
 On frontispiece or title-page
 Of that old time, when on the stage
 "Sweet Nell" set "Rowley's" heart alight !

And you, O Friend, to whom I write,
 Must not deny, e'en though you might,
 Through fear of modern pirates' rage,
 Old Books are best.

What though the prints be not so bright,
 The paper dark, the binding slight ?
 Our author, be he dull or sage,
 Returning from a distant age
 So lives again. We say of right :
 Old Books are best.

BEVERLY CHEW

OF MY BOOKS.

AROUND the narrow circuit of the room
 Breast-high the books I love range file on
 file ;

And when, day-weary, I would rest awhile,
 As once again slow falls the gathering gloom
 Upon the world, I love to pass my hand
 Along their serried ranks, and silent stand
 In breathless heark'ning to their silent speech.
 With rev'rent hand I touch the back of each
 Of these my books. How much of their dear
 selves—

The hand that held the pen, the brain that
 wrought

The subtle fancies on these pages caught—
 Have men immortal left upon my shelves !

And then sometimes a sudden chill doth strike
 My heart with very horror, and I shrink
 Away from their dull touch, shudd'ring to think
 How much of human life that, vampire-like,
 These books have sucked beneath their leathern
 wings,

How brains have broken and frail bodies bent
 To feed with human blood these bloodless things.

In this thin book of poesy is pent
 A beautiful young life ;—imperial Rome
 Holds what was mortal of it. Then I see,
 All withered at the top, a noble tree
 Here in the scathing scorn of this dark tome.

By this long line of books that mutely stands
 A master-mind was wrecked, so that in years
 He sat a poor old man in dotting tears,
 Because his dogs in pity licked his hands.

But then again there comes a rushing thought,
 And to my *living* books my arms I raise
 In loving fellowship of life and breath,
 And, like poor Southey when his brain was naught
 Save a pale glimmering light of other days,
 I touch them tenderly. My spirit saith :
 "Who gave their lives for these can know no
 death.
 For I have walked with them in mortal guise
 Through woodland ways and swarming city
 streets ;
 Yea, have I met the gaze of Shelley's eyes,
 And in ' Hyperion ' kissed the lips of Keats."

CHARLES WASHINGTON COLEMAN.



A BOOK BY THE BROOK.

GIVE me a nook and a book,
 And let the proud world spin round ;
 Let it scramble by hook or by crook
 For wealth or a name with a sound.
 You are welcome to amble your ways,
 Aspirers to place or to glory ;
 May big bells jangle your praise,
 And golden pens blazon your story :

For me, let me dwell in my nook,
Here by the curve of this brook,
That croons to the tune of my book.
Whose melody wafts me forever
On the waves of an unseen river.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE



MY BOOKCASE.

HOW many volumes do I miss !
I wish, among folks' duties,
That they would rank returning books.
But those morocco beauties
Are never touched except by me,
And really, though I know it's
A shame, I do rejoice to think
That no one borrows poets.

To those lost books my fancy clings,
O'er them my memory grovels,
I swear in spirit when I see
The gaps among the novels.
The Thackeray I "loved and lost"
I mourn with sorrow tender,
Whoever has it also has
The curses of the lender.

The second shelf I frankly own
A motley, queer collection,
Half-filled with grave philosophers,
In spite of Kant's defection.

But Calverley and Kingsley sit
Tucked in among the Germans,
And "Ouida" snugly nestles next
My only book of sermons.

Spencer keeps cheerful company
With "How I caught a Tartar,"
Near them the book I treasure most,
My well-belovèd "Sartor."
Montgomery by Macaulay stands,
The scorned beside the scorner,
And dear Mark Twain with Rabelais
Is chatting in the corner.

Homer ! This same old copy shone,
Star of my childish vision ;
To read it for myself was once
The height of my ambition.
Full fifteen years ago I made
That blot upon the binding,
Trying to print my name in Greek,
And difficulty finding.

Dear books ! you answer questioning
Without a why or wherefore.
Our friendship never had a jar ;
You seem to know and care for
The tender touches that I give
To every well-worn cover,
And as I love you, friends of mine,
I could not love a lover.

BESSIE CRAIGMYLE.

“WHY CANNOT I READ TO-NIGHT?”

WHY cannot I read to-night? Because
 Fair Silvia's eyes have smitten me through
 Or visions of boating make me pause
 As I read of the pranks of a trireme's crew?—
 But I care for Silvia not two straws,
 I always thought her mouth was askew;
 A landsman I who grudge the applause
 Those saucy aquatics deem their due.
 Then say, why cannot I read to-night?
 Do I dream of a face that I loved at school?
 Of the hour that suddenly reft its light,
 That took the genius, left the fool?—
 Ah, no, if I read my case aright,
 The past is dead in my torpid brain:
 When I lost whate'er made existence bright,
 I lost the pleasure of feeling pain.
 Am I haunted by echoes of J. K. S.?
 Or the jocund carols of C. S. C.?
 Enslaved to the Lady of Lyonesse,
 Or out on a frolic with soldiers three?
 But not *my* soul did the Muses bless
 With a love of the lyre—not to mention the liar—
 Pray pardon me, Rudyard; romance, I guess,
 Can strike from my dulness no spark of fire.
 Why cannot I read to-night, then, why?
 Found at last—more worth than some deep under
 ground hoard,
 —That villain next door's making melody
 On banjo—three strings snapped and hole in the
 sound-board.

W. D.

IN A LIBRARY.

A PRECIOUS mouldering pleasure 'tis
To meet an antique book,
In just the dress his century wore ;
A privilege, I think,
His venerable hand to take,
And warming in our own,
A passage back, or two, to make
To times when he was young.
His quaint opinions to inspect,
His knowledge to unfold
On what concerns our mutual mind,
The literature of old :
What interested scholars most,
What competitions ran
When Plato was a certainty
And Sophocles a man,
When Sappho was a living girl,
And Beatrice wore
The gown that Dante deified.
Facts, centuries before,
He traverses familiar,
As one should come to town
And tell you all your dreams were true :
He lived where dreams were sown.
His presence is enchantment,
You beg him not to go ;
His volumes shake their vellum heads
And tantalise, just so.

EMILY DICKINSON.

THE BOOK-PLATE'S PETITION.

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE TEMPLE.

WHILE cynic CHARLES still trimm'd the vane
 'Twixt *Querouaille* and *Castlemaine*,
 In days that shocked JOHN EVELYN,
 My First Possessor fix'd me in.
 In days of *Dutchmen* and of frost,
 The narrow sea with JAMES I cross'd,
 Returning when once more began
 The Age of *Saturn* and of ANNE.
 I am a part of all the past ;
 I knew the GEORGES, first and last ;
 I have been oft where else was none
 Save the great wig of ADDISON ;
 And seen on shelves beneath me grope
 The little eager form of POPE.
 I lost the Third that own'd me when
 French NOAILLES fled at Dettingen ;
 The year JAMES WOLFE surpris'd Quebec,
 The Fourth in hunting broke his neck ;
 The day that WILLIAM HOGARTH dy'd
 The Fifth one found me in Cheapside.
 This was a *Scholar*, one of those
 Whose *Greek* is sounder than their *hose* ;
 He lov'd old books and nappy ale,
 So liv'd at Streatham, next to THRALE.
 'Twas there this stain of grease I boast
 Was made by DR. JOHNSON'S toast.
 (He did it, as I think, for spite ;
 My Master called him *Jacobite* !)

And now that I so long to-day
 Have rested *post discrimina*,
 Safe in the brass-wir'd bookcase where
 I watch'd the Vicar's whit'ning hair,
 Must I these travell'd bones inter
 In some *Collector's* sepulchre?
 Must I be torn from hence and thrown
 With *frontispiece* and *colophon*?
 With vagrant *Es*, and *Is*, and *Os*,
 The spoil of plunder'd *Folios*!
 With scraps and snippets that to ME
 Are naught but *kitchen company*!
 Nay, rather, FRIEND, this favour grant me:
 Tear me at once; *but don't transplant me.*

AUSTIN DOBSON.

Cheltenham, Sept. 31st, 1792.



THE BOOKWORM.

WE flung the close-kept casement wide;
 The myriad atom-play
 Streamed, with the mid-day's glancing tide,
 Across him as he lay;
 Only the unused summer gust
 Moved the thin hair of Dryasdust.

The notes he writ were barely dry;
 The entering breeze's breath
 Fluttered the fruitless casuistry,
 Checked at the leaf where Death—
 The final commentator—thrust
 His cold "Here endeth Dryasdust."

O fool and blind ! The leaf that grew,
The opening bud, the trees,
The face of men, he nowise knew,
Or careless turned from these
To delve, in folios' rust and must,
The tomb he lived in, dry as dust.

He left, for mute Salmasius,
The lore a child may teach,—
For saws of dead Libanius,
The sound of uttered speech ;
No voice had pierced the sheep-skin crust
That bound the heart of Dryasdust.

And so, with none to close his eyes,
And none to mourn him dead,
He in his dumb book-Babel lies
With grey dust garmented.
Let be : pass on. It is but just—
These were thy gods, O Dryasdust !

Dig we his grave where no birds greet,—
He loved no song of birds ;
Lay we his bones where no men meet,—
He loved no spoken words ;
He let his human-nature rust—
Write his *Hic Jacet* in the Dust.

AUSTIN DOBSON

MY BOOKS.

THEY dwell in the odour of camphor,
They stand in a Sheraton shrine,
They are "warranted early editions,"
These worshipful tomes of mine ;—

In their creamiest "Oxford vellum,"
In their redolent "crushed Levant,"
With their delicate watered linings,
They are jewels of price, I grant ;—

Blind-tooled and morocco-jointed,
They have Bedford's daintiest dress,
They are graceful, attenuate, polished,
But they gather the dust, no less ;—

For the row that I prize is yonder,
Away on the unglazed shelves,
The bulged and the bruised *octavos*,
The dear and the dumpy twelves,—

Montaigne with his sheep-skin blistered,
And Howell the worse for wear,
And the worm-drilled Jesuits' Horace,
And the little old cropped Molière,—

And the Burton I bought for a florin,
And the Rabelais foxed and flea'd,—
For the others I never have opened,
But those are the books I read.

AUSTIN DOBSON.

THE COLLECTOR TO HIS LIBRARY.

BROWN Books of mine, who never yet
 Have caused me anguish or regret,—
 Save when some fiend in human shape
 Has set your tender sides agape,
 Or soiled with some unmanly smear
 The whiteness of your page sincere,
 Or scored you with some phrase inane,
 The bantling of his idle brain,—
 I love you : and because must end
 This commerce between friend and friend,
 I do implore each kindly fate—
 To each and all I supplicate—
 That you whom I have loved so long
 May not be vended “for a song,”—
 That you, my dear desire and care,
 May ’scape the common thoroughfare,
 The dust, the eating rain, and all
 The shame and squalor of the stall.
 Rather I trust your lot may touch
 Some Cræsus—if there should be such—
 To buy you, and that you may so
 From Cræsus unto Cræsus go
 Till that inevitable day
 When comes your moment of decay.

This, more than other good, I pray.

AUSTIN DOBSON.



TO A PASTORAL POET.

A MONG my best I put your Book,
 O Poet of the breeze and brook !
 (That breeze and brook which blows and falls
 More soft to those in city walls,)—
 Among my best : and keep it still
 Till down the fair grass-girdled hill,
 Where slopes my garden-slip, there goes
 The wandering wind that wakes the rose,
 And scares the cohort that explore
 The broad-faced sunflower o'er and o'er,
 Or starts the restless bees that fret
 The bindweed and the mignonette.

Then shall I take your Book, and dream
 I lie beside some haunted stream ;
 And watch the crisping waves that pass,
 And watch the flicker in the grass ;
 And wait—and wait—and wait to see
 The Nymph . . . that never comes to me !

AUSTIN DOBSON.



FOR A COPY OF HERRICK.

M ANY days have come and gone,
 Many suns have set and shone,
 HERRICK, since thou sang'st of Wake,
 Morris-dance and Barley-break ;—
 Many men have ceased from care,
 Many maidens have been fair,
 Since thou sang'st of JULIA's eyes,
 JULIA's lawns and tiffanies ;—

Many things are past : but thou,
GOLDEN-MOUTH, art singing now,
Singing clearly as of old,
And thy numbers are of gold.

AUSTIN DOBSON.



DON QUIXOTE.

BEHIND thy pasteboard, on thy battered
hack,

Thy lean cheek striped with plaster to and fro,
Thy long spear levelled at the unseen foe,
And doubtful Sancho trudging at thy back,
Thou wert a figure strange enough, good lack !
To make Wiseacredom, both high and low,
Rub purblind eyes, and (having watched thee go)
Dispatch its Dogberrys upon thy track :
Alas ! poor Knight ! Alas ! poor soul possesst !
Yet would to-day when Courtesy grows chill
And life's fine loyalties are turned to jest
Some fire of thine might burn within us still !
Ah, would but one might lay his lance in rest,
And charge in earnest—were it but a mill !

AUSTIN DOBSON.



TO A MISSAL OF THE THIRTEENTH
CENTURY.

MISSAL of the Gothic age,
Missal with the blazoned page,
Whence, O Missal, hither come,
From what dim Scriptorium ?

Whose the name that wrought thee thus,
Ambrose or Theophilus,
Bending, through the waning light,
O'er thy vellum scraped and white ;

Weaving 'twixt thy rubric lines
Sprays and leaves and quaint designs ;
Setting round thy border scrolled
Buds of purple and of gold ?

Ah !—a wondering brotherhood,
Doubtless, by that artist stood,
Raising o'er his careful ways
Little choruses of praise !

Glad when his deft hand would paint
Strife of Sathanas and Saint,
Or in secret coign entwist
Jest of cloister humourist.

Well the worker earned his wage
Bending o'er the blazoned page !
Tired the hand and tired the wit
Ere the final *Explicit* !

Not as ours the books of old—
Things that steam can stamp and fold ;
Not as ours the books of yore—
Rows of type and nothing more.

Then a book was still a Book,
Where a wistful man might look,
Finding something through the whole
Beating—like a human soul.

In that growth of day by day,
When to labour was to pray,
Surely something vital passed
To the patient page at last ;

Something that one still perceives
Vaguely present in the leaves !
Something from the worker lent ;
Something mute—but eloquent !

AUSTIN DOBSON.



A BOOKISH BALLAD.

(AFTER HOOD.)

I HAVE a goodly library, but oft they disappear,
Those cherished volumes which I hold so very,
—very dear.

I lost my *Bacon* t'other day—could anything be
harder ?

My cook had taken it by stealth—I found it in the
Larder !

I've just surveyed my books again, from ceiling to
the floor,

And though my sight is very good, I can't see any
More !

My *Swift* has flown ; my *Martin* too—'tis *Autumn*
—here's a shock !

I see that Captain Bolter has *bolted* with my
Lock(e) !

My *Hope* departed long ago, and now through
some one's wiles
My dingy study has become a stranger to my
Smiles !
My *Lever* left me long ago, I know not when or
how—
I can't build "castles in the air," my *Mason's*
missing now.

And yet, in spite of these mishaps, I have some
pleasures still,
For can I not devour my *Lamb* and *Bullock*, too,
at will ?
A tit-bit, too, from *Hog(g)* is rare—a slice of
Wolf(e) not bad—
And then, when I am *thirsty*—why, I've *Porter*
too, bedad.

My *Spencer* has been boned, 'tis true, but they
have left my *Hood*,
Nor have they filched my *Mackintosh*, so I can
face a flood.
At last I've found a *Key* to *Lock(e)*, though, it is
odd, no doubt,
That, when I take his meaning *in*, I find his
meaning *out* !

I still enjoy my *Crab(be)'s* nice *tales*, and, to my
wishes yielding,
My boy became a cricketer by studying his
Fielding.

A Book-Lover's Panegyric. 43

I have the works of *Watts* his name.—I'm colour
blind, 'tis said,
For *Black* and *White* and *Brown* with me are
very often *re(a)d* !

I'm very dutiful, of course, so love my *Mother well*.
My *Hare* and *Hunt* have vanished, too, but *where*
I cannot tell !

I have a *Park* to ramble through—and *this* is *not*
a myth—

Alas ! my *Smith* can *nail* no more, for they have
nailed my *Smith* !

But yet with *Bacon*, *Lamb*, and *Crab*(*be*), and
perhaps a bit of *Steel*(*e*),

I still can make, whene'er I choose, a *literary*
meal !

F. B. DOVETON.



A BOOK-LOVER'S PANEGYRIC.

I.

LET old Petrarca sing of love,
Its passion and its bliss,
And in his sugared sonnets tell
The rapture of a kiss !
Let Bacchanalian votaries
Exulting praise their wine—
But in the midst of all this praise
The praise of books be mine !

II.

A health to books ! come, Comrades all,
And pledge me this full cup ;
Raise high the foaming goblets' brim
And drain the liquor up !
Come, quaff this nectarean bowl,
The brim raised to your lips,
So this enthusiastic health
All others shall eclipse !

III.

A health to books ! a royal toast,
And honoured by a few,
But as the march of time goes on
The world shall drink it too !
Its men and women shall arise,
And sing in zealous strain
Their song of praise, and goblets raise
To drink it o'er again !

IV.

So here's to books, to noble books,
Our pleasure and our boast ;
Arise, ye denizens of earth,
To honour this fair toast !
Then here's to books, immortal books
Light of our nights and days,—
Stand up, O Universe, and chant
A pæan in their praise !

V.

And, once again, a health to books,
Your goblets all refill ;
When all things mortal are decayed
May books be with us still !
Then quaff a toast to glorious books
In cups of ruby wine,
And while the world extols things base
The praise of books be mine !

CYRIL M. DREW.



BOOKS.

I.

WHEN sorrow sets around thy wayward path,
And many troubles follow in her train ;
When dire mischance it seems will never wane,
And life for thee no sort of pleasure hath ;
When friendship proves as frail as any lath,
Snaps in a trice and leaves the dull slow pain—
The aching heart that ne'er may hope again—
And drear despair seems life's sole aftermath,
There is an outlet from thy dreary creed ;
There is a pasture on which thou may'st feed ;
There is a never-failing friend at hand.
Turn to thy shelves and choose a goodly tome,
A mighty mind of ancient Greece or Rome,
Perchance a bard of thine own native land.

II.

Then may'st thou leave all troubles far behind,
 And soar unto the regions of the blest ;
 Then be thy body, mind and soul, at rest,
 Oblivious of the tempest and the wind
 That howls around the shipwreck of thy mind.
 For, by the thralldom of that tome possessed,
 Despair hath lost its potency to molest,
 And not an inlet can thy troubles find.
 Oh, blessings be on every poet head !
 With wreaths of joy may each be garlanded,
 And happiness for ever be their meed !
 Who for us men hath wrought so great a joy,
 Devoid of all adulterate alloy—
 A genuine soil whereon the soul may feed.

CYRIL M. DREW.



ON AN OLD ROMAUNT.

WHEN the night is dark and dreary, and the
 north-wind whistles shrill,
 And the snow-storm drives in fury down the plain
 beneath the hill,
 Like the necromancer's mirror, when his magic
 perfumes burn,
 Mocking Time, these curious volumes make the
 glorious Past return.

Fast as ripples on the river, or cloud-shadows on
the grass,
As I read their quaint old pages, down my cur-
tained chamber pass
Mitred priest, and hospitaller, armed and mounted
for the fray,
Bands of bronzed condottieri, maidens fair as
laughing May.

All that fancy loves to cherish, of the grand old
feudal times—
Palmer guides, and weary pilgrims, wending home
from distant climes,
Trembling Jews with jewel caskets, border-chiefs
who own no law,
Quivered bands of merry archers, mustered on the
“greené shaw,”

Norman holds, embattled belfries, gyves, and
chains, and dungeons dim,
Winding stairs and blazing beacons, ancient arms
grotesque and grim,
Pensive nuns, in quest of simples, in the lowly
midnight hour,
Adepts o’er alembics chanting uncouth rhymes of
mystic power,

Foreign marts, Venetian Doges, bales of precious
merchandise,
Stately streets in Flemish cities, burgher crowds
in peaceful guise,

Mighty dukes by guards attended, foresters in
kirtles green,
Silver founts and flaring tapers, ladies sheathed in
jewels' sheen,

Moorish forts in far Granada, portals barred and
turbans blue,
Gardens green as blissful Eden, crystal fountains
fair to view,
Divans in the proud Alhambra, fairy mosques of
Parian stone,
Groups of Moors and whiskered Spaniards, tilting
round the Soldan's throne.

And enrapt I gaze in silence, like a child before a
show,
Heedless, in my joy and wonder, how the golden
moments flow,
Till the cock's shrill ringing clarion breaks the
spell and clears the air,
And I find me silent seated in my old accustomed
chair.



GREECE C. DUTT.

MY BOOKS.

MY books, my books, my kingdom mine !
I have no need for love to pine ;
I have no mistress but my books,
They never give me frowning looks,
Nor mock my heart when hopes decline.

But women change sans cause or sign,
And so I court the Muses Nine

In my poor den, or shady nooks,
My books, my books.

I love to see them line on line,
In shabby coat or superfine.

They are such friends—from bards to cooks,
And speak with joy of babbling brooks,
With peaceful woods that ever shine.

Fill me up with Lethean wine,
My books, my books !

S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD.



THE TRUTH ABOUT HORACE.

IT is very aggravating
To hear the solemn prating
Of the fossils who are stating
That old Horace was waiting ;
When we know that with the ladies
He was always raising hades,
And with many an escapade his
Best productions are imbued.

There's really not much harm in a
Large number of his carmina,
But these people find alarm in a
Few records of his acts ;
So they'd squelch the muse caloric,
And to students sophomoric
They'd present as metaphoric
What old Horace meant for facts.

We have always thought 'em lazy,
 Now we adjudge 'em crazy.
 Why, Horace was a daisy
 That was very much alive ;
 And the wisest of us know him
 As his Lydia verses show him.
 Go, read that virile poem,
 It is No. 25.

He was a very owl, sir,
 And, starting out to prowl, sir,
 You bet he made Rome howl, sir,
 Until he filled his date ;
 With a massic-laden ditty
 And a classic maiden pretty
 He painted up the city,
 And Mæcenus paid the freight !

EUGENE FIELD.



THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S BRIDE.

THE women-folk are like to books—
 Most pleasing to the eye,
 Whereon if anybody looks
 He feels disposed to buy.

I hear that many are for sale—
 Those that record no dates,
 And such editions as regale
 The view with coloured plates.

Of every quality and grade
And size they may be found—
Quite often beautifully made,
As often poorly bound.

Now, as for me, had I my choice,
I'd choose no folios tall,
But some octavo to rejoice
My sight and heart withal.

As plump and podgy as a snipe—
Well worth her weight in gold,
Of honest, clean, conspicuous type,
And just the size to hold !

With such a volume for my wife,
How should I keep and con ;
How like a dream should speed my life
Unto its colophon !

Her frontispiece should be more fair
Than any coloured plate ;
Blooming with health, she would not care
To extra-illustrate.

And in her pages there should be
A wealth of prose and verse,
With now and then a *jeu d'esprit*—
But nothing ever worse !

Prose for me when I wished for prose,
Verse, when to verse inclined—
For ever bringing sweet repose
To body, heart and mind.

Oh, I should bind this priceless prize
 In bindings full and fine,
 And keep her where no human eyes
 Should see her charms, but mine !

With such a fair unique as this
 What happiness abounds !
 Who—who could paint my rapturous bliss,
 My joy unknown to Lowndes !

EUGENE FIELD.



THE BIBLIOMANIAC'S PRAYER.

KEEP me, I pray, in wisdom's way,
 That I may truths eternal seek ;
 I need protecting care to-day.
 My purse is light, my flesh is weak ;
 So banish from my erring heart
 All baleful appetites and hints
 Of Satan's fascinating art—
 Of first editions and of prints.
 Direct me in some godly walk
 Which leads away from bookish strife,
 That I with pious deed and talk
 May extra-illustrate my life.

But if, O Lord, it pleaseth Thee
 To keep me in temptation's way,
 I humbly ask that I may be
 Most notably beset to-day.

Let my temptation be a book
Which I shall purchase, hold, and keep,
Whereon when other men shall look,
They'll wail to know I got it cheap.
Oh, let it such a volume be
As in rare copperplates abounds !—
Large paper, clean, and fair to see,
Uncut, unique—unknown to Lowndes.

EUGENE FIELD.



A VOLUME OF DANTE.

I LIE unread, alone. None heedeth me.
Day after day the cobwebs are unswept
From my dim covers. I have lain and slept
In dust and darkness for a century.
An old forgotten volume I. You see !
Such mighty words within my heart are kept
That, reading once, great Ariosto wept
In vain despair so impotent to be.

And once, with pensive eyes and drooping head,
Musing, Vittoria Colonna came,
And touched my leaves with dreamy finger-tips,
Lifted me up half absently, and read ;
Then kissed the page with sudden, tender lips,
And sighed, and murmured one beloved name.

CAROLINE WILDER FELLOWS.

AMONG MY BOOKS.

A MOTLEY COLLECTION.

AND there is leaning "Pole on Whist
Against "The Shorter Catechist";
A row of Browning, just above
That book of Michelet's on Love;
Sir Thomas Browne, discreet and staid,
Upon the upper shelf is laid;
And "Walks in Rome" by Mr. Hare
Is jostled by my Molière.
A vellum Villon, nothing loth,
Hobnobs with Balzac (rascals both);
Hosea Biglow's wit and pith
Are matched by those of Sydney Smith,
And Mr. Caudle's better half
Stands up with Petrarch, bound in calf.
And here and there your eye may see
A Dickens or a Thackeray.
That Irving peeping from the row
Is shelf-worn, for I love it so.
Here gentle Elia flitting goes
Round Marlowe's leonine repose,
While Goldsmith finds a welcome rest
With Aphra Behn, in russia drest.
And Murger's "Latin Quarter Life"
Is with "Josiah Allen's Wife."
Look all around, you have not missed
A single early dramatist.
I've all the poets—every one
From Chaucer down to Tennyson,

And here you see (I read it yet)
Heptameron of Margaret.
A work or two of Thomas Paine,
The essays of M'sieur Montaigne,
A "Joseph Andrews" bound in blue,
A Virgil and a Horace, too.

These are the men that nightly meet,
And hold me in their converse sweet.

PERCY FLAHE.



BOOK BROTHERHOOD.

HERE are my companions sleeping
Tranquilly in each closed book,
Till a spirit in me leaping
From its bondage dares to look.

Here are those who felt deep heart-throes
In the morning of the earth,
All untutored, as the wind blows,
Giving human song its birth ;
Diverse men in diverse races
Hearing, answering some faint call,
Finding links and losing traces
Where Oblivion drops its pall ;
From chaotic dreams evolving
Thought once breathed on speaking stone,
Whose far-echoes now are solving
Problems in Thought's later zone ;
Disputants of soul and matter—
God the Force, or Force the God—

As the autumn winds that scatter
Dry leaves on a dewy sod ;
So departing, coming ever
With a new-inspired endeavour,
Here as brothers rest together.

Books that keep alive the ages
On my shelves abide in peace,
Truth enshrined within their pages
Waiting for a full release ;
Not alone in one tome dwelling,
But in all, perchance, a gleam
In the dark, some dark dispelling
Of humanity's strange dream.
Old true friends in welcome places
Greet me in each varying mood,
And new friends with fresh young faces
Woo with keen solicitude ;
Ancient discords merging slowly
Into one harmonious whole,
Time absorbing high or lowly
In the majesty of soul.

Mighty dead, but mightier living
Spirit of the brain and pen,
Founts of Thought for ever giving
Impetus to yearning men,
So departing, coming ever
With a new-inspired endeavour,
Here as brothers rest together.

EDWARD FOSKETT.

FROM "IDYLLS AND EPIGRAMS."

OUR master, Meleager, he who framed
 The first Anthology and daintiest,
 Mated each minstrel with a flower, and named
 For each the blossom that beseemed him best.
 'Twas then as now ; garlands were somewhat rare,
 Candidates many : one in a doleful strain
 Lamented thus : " This is a sad affair ;
 How shall I face my publisher again ?
 Lacking some emblem suitable for me,
 My book's undone ; I shall not sell a copy."
 " Take courage, son," quoth Phoebus, " there
 must be
 Somewhere or other certainly a poppy."

RICHARD GARNETT.



TO THE BOOKWORM.

REST thy book among the flowers,
 Rest thy limbs amidst the heather ;
 Looking skyward, thought endowers
 All in life and books together.
 Ah ! welcome musings ! only then
 We learn that nature has to tell
 So much, it takes a world of men
 To hear ; long ages to unspell ;
 And ages longer to unfold.
 See our books among the flowers !
 Rest our limbs in leafy bowers !
 Learning much that's yet untold.

G. LAWRENCE GOMME.

TO A BIBLIOMANIAC.

BECAUSE your books are richly bound,
You feel a scholar through and through ?
Then one Cremona, smooth and sound,
Might make a fiddler of you, too !

EDMUND GOSSE.



WITH A COPY OF HERRICK.

FRESH with all airs of woodland brooks
And scents of showers,
Take to your haunt of holy books
This saint of flowers.

When meadows burn with budding May,
And heaven is blue,
Before his shrine our prayers we say,—
Saint Robin true.

Love crowned with thorns is on his staff,—
Thorns of sweet-briar ;
His benediction is a laugh,
Birds are his choir.

His sacred robe of white and red
Unction distils,
He hath a nimbus round his head
Of daffodils.

EDMUND GOSSE.

IN THE LIBRARY.

THE room was given to firegleams and to night,
 And as I mused, lo ! where the books had
 been

Were souls of books, alive, and on my sight

Dawned growing day, in midst whereof was seen,
 With sad stern face, eyes pitying, vesture white,
 The Lord of Souls, who, dying, won Life's fight.
 Then all the book-souls bowed before the bright
 Surrounding glory of the Lord of Light.

Then, one by one, He touched them on the side,
 And some to scented ashes sank and died ;

Some gave the semblance of a human heart,
 Some like a working hand of help did show,
 Some changed to lamps tipped with a steadfast
 glow,

One only of its Lord was counterpart.

H. V. S. HERBERT.



THE REALISTIC CULT.

WHEN this old world was younger by a score
 of years or more,
 It hadn't been enlightened by our realistic lore—
 A novel sort of ethical philosophy, combined
 With therapeutic fiction of the most "progressive"
 kind.

For Tolstoi hadn't then begun his theories to teach—

(Ignoring quite the maxim, "You must practise what you preach")—

That marriage is a snare devised the virtuous to beguile,

And family affection is a feeling to revile.

And Zola—for his pen was yet an embryonic quill—

Had not essayed to medicate our every moral ill!

With allopathic doses of immoral literature,

Prescribed by homœopathic rule that like the like will cure.

And Kipling's light had never failed—in fact, it hadn't shone,

Revealing depths of folly that had else remained unknown ;

And Ibsen hadn't proved that, since one pillar couldn't stand,

Our social structure therefore is unstably built on sand.

Alas ! in ignorance so dense it simulated bliss,

We little dreamed how woefully the world had gone amiss

Before those streams of wisdom had begun their copious flow

From Russian steppe and Paris slum and Indian bungalow.

M. B. HILL.

IN A COPY OF "OVER THE TEACUPS."

DEAL gently with us, ye who read !
 Our largest hope is unfulfilled,
 The promise still outruns the deed,
 The tower, but not the spire we build.

Our whitest pearl we never find ;
 Our ripest fruit we never reach ;
 The flowering moments of the mind
 Lose half their petals in our speech.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.



BOOKS.

BOOKS ! sweet associates of the silent hour,
 What blessed aspirations do I owe
 To your companionship—your peaceful power
 High and pure pleasure ever can bestow,—
 Of noble ones I trace the path through life,
 Joy in their joys, and sorrow as they mourn ;
 Gaze on their Christian animating strife,
 And shed some fond tears o'er their untimely
 urn :
 Or with heroic beings tread the soil
 Of a freed country, by themselves made free,
 And taste the recompense of virtuous toil,
 The exaltation of humanity.

F. HORNBLOWER.

BOOKS AND BINDINGS.

ON my study shelves they stand,
Well known all to eye and hand
Bound in gorgeous cloth of gold,
In morocco rich and old,
Some in paper, plain and cheap,
Some in muslin, calf, and sheep ;
Volumes great and volumes small
Ranged along my study wall.
But their contents are past finding
By their size or by the binding.

There is one with gold agleam,
Like the Sangreal in a dream,
Back and boards in every part
Triumph of the binder's art ;
Costing more, 'tis well believed,
Than the author e'er received.
But its contents ? Idle tales,
Flappings of a shallop's sails !
In the treasury of learning
Scarcely worth a penny's turning.

Here's a tome in paper plain,
Soiled and torn and marred with stain,
Cowering from each statelier book
In the darkest, dustiest nook.
Take it down, and lo ! each page
Breathes the wisdom of a sage !
Weighed a thousand times in gold,
Half its worth would not be told,
For all the truth of ancient story
Crowns each line with deathless glory.

On my study shelves they stand ;
But my study walls expand,
As mind's pinions are unfurled,
Till they compass all the world.
Endless files go marching by,
Men of lowly rank and high,
Some in broadcloth, gem-adorned,
Some in homespun, fortune-scorned ;
But God's scales that all are weighed in
Heed not what each man's arrayed in.

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON.



TO THE GENTLE READER.

"A French writer (whom I love well) speaks of three kinds of companions—men, women and books."—
SIR JOHN DAVYS.*

THREE kinds of companions, men, women
and books,
Were enough, said the elderly Sage, for his
ends.

And the women we deem that he chose for their
looks,

And the men for their cellars : the books were
his friends :

"Man delights me not," often, "nor woman,"
but books

Are the best of good comrades in loneliest nooks.

* I never read Sir John Davys, though doubtless he
is a very nice writer, and the motto is at second hand.
It was quoted by Mr. Richard Stoddard, of America.

For man will be wrangling—for woman will fret
About everything infinitesimal small :
Like the Sage in our Plato, I'm "anxious to get
On the side"—on the sunnier side—"of a wall."
Let the wind of the world toss the nations like rooks,
If only you'll leave me at peace with my Books.

And which are my books? Why, 'tis much as
you please,

For given 'tis a book, it can hardly be wrong,
And Bradshaw himself I can study with ease,
Though for choice I might call for a Sermon or
Song ;

And Locker on London, and Sala on Cooks,
And "Tom Brown," and Plotinus, they're all of
them Books.

There's Fielding to lap one in currents of mirth ;
There's Herrick to sing of a flower or a fay ;
Or good Maître François to bring one to earth,
If Shelley or Coleridge have snatched one away ;
There's Müller on Speech, there's Gurney on
Spooks,
There's Tylor on Totems, there's all sorts of
Books.

There's roaming in regions where every one's been,
Encounters where no one was ever before,
There's "Leaves" from the Highlands we owe to
the Queen,

There's Holly's and Leo's Adventures in Kôr ;
There's Tanner, who dwelt with Pawnees and
Chinooks--

You can cover a great deal of country in Books.

There are books, highly thought of, that nobody
reads,

There's Gensius' dearly delectable tome
On the Cannibal—he on his neighbour who feeds—
And in blood-red morocco 'tis bound, by
Derome ;

There's Montaigne here (a Foppens), there's
Roberts (on Flukes),

There's Elzevirs, Aldines, and Gryphius' Books.

There's Bunyan, there's Walton, in early editions,

There's many a quarto uncommonly rare ;

There's quaint old Quevedo, a dream with his
visions,

There's Jonson the portly, and Burton the spare ;
There's Boston of Ettrick, who preached of the
“ Crooks

In the Lots ” of us mortals, who bargain for
Books.

There's Ruskin to keep one exclaiming “ What
next ? ”

There's Browning to puzzle, and Gilbert to chaff,
And “ Marcus Aurelius ” to soothe one if vexed,

And good *Marcus Tuainus* to lend you a laugh ;
And there's capital tomes that are filled with fly
hooks,

And I've frequently found them the best kind of
Books.

ANDREW LANG.



THE BOOK BATTALION.

WHEREVER I go, there's a trusty battalion
That follows me faithfully, steady and
true ;

Their force, when I falter, I safely may rally on,
Knowing their stoutness will carry me through :
Some fifteen hundred in order impartial,
So ranged that they tell what they mean by their
looks.

Of all the armies the world can marshal
There are no better soldiers than the well-trying
books.

Dumb in their ranks on the shelves imprisoned,
They never retreat. Give the word, and they'll
fire !

A few with scarlet and gold are bedizened,
But many muster in rough attire ;
And some, with service and scars grown wizened,
Seem hardly the mates for their fellows in youth ;
Yet they, and the troops armed only with quiz and
Light laughter, all battle alike for the truth.

Here are those who gave motive to sock and to
buskin ;

With critics, historians, poets galore ;

A cheaply uniformed set of Ruskin,
Which Ruskin would hate from his heart's very
core ;

Molière ('99), an old calf-bound edition,
" *De Pierre Didot l'aîné ! et de Firmin Didot,*"
Which, meek and demure, with a sort of contrition,
Is masking its gun-lights, with fun all aglow ;

From the Fly-leaf of a Book. 67

And Smollett and Fielding, as veterans battered—
Cloth stripped from their backs, and their sides
out of joint,
The pictures of life all naked and tattered
Being thus applied to themselves with a point ;
And six or eight books that I wrote myself,
To look at which, even, I'm half afraid ;
They brought me more labour and pleasure than
pelf,
And are clamouring still because they're not paid.
But these raw levies remain still faithful,
Because they know that volumes old
Stand by me, although their eyes, dim and wraith-
ful,
Remind me they seldom at profit were sold.
So I say, be they splendid or tatterdemalion,
If only you know what they mean by their looks,
You will never find a better battalion
Of soldiers to serve you than well-tried books.

GEORGE PARSONS LATHROP.



FROM THE FLY-LEAF OF A BOOK OF OLD
PLAYS.

AT Cato's Head in Russell Street
These leaves she sat a-stitching ;
I fancy she was trim and neat,
Blue-eyed and quite bewitching.

Before her in the street below,
All powder, ruffs, and laces,
There strutted idle London beaux
To ogle pretty faces ;

While, filling many a Sedan chair
With hoop and monstrous feather,
In patch and powder, London's fair
Went trooping past together.

Swift, Addison, and Pope, mayhap
They sauntered slowly past her,
Or printer's boy with gown and cap
For Steele went trotting faster.

For beau nor wit had she a look,
Nor lord nor lady minding ;
She bent her head above this book,
Attentive to her binding.

And one stray thread of golden hair,
Caught on her nimble fingers,
Was stitched within this volume, where
Until to-day it lingers.

Past and forgotten, beaux and fair ;
Wigs, powder, all out-dated ;
A queer antique, the Sedan chair ;
Pope, stiff and antiquated.

Yet, as I turn these odd old plays,
This single stray lock finding,
I'm back in those forgotten days,
And watch her at her binding.

WALTER LEARNED.

THE PASSIONATE READER TO HIS POET.

DOTH it not thrill thee, Poet,
 Dead and dust though thou art,
 To feel how I press thy singing
 Close to my heart?—

Take it at night to my pillow,
 Kiss it before I sleep,
 And again when the delicate morning
 Beginneth to peep?

See how I bathe thy pages
 Here in the light of the sun,
 Through thy leaves, as a wind among roses,
 The breezes shall run.

Feel how I take thy poem
 And bury within it my face,
 As I pressed it last night in the heart of a flower,
 Or deep in a dearer place.

Think, as I love thee, Poet,
 A thousand love beside;
 Dear women love to press thee too
 Against a sweeter side.

Art thou not happy, Poet?
 I sometimes dream that I
 For such a fragrant fame as thine
 Would gladly sing and die.

Say, wilt thou change thy glory
 For this same youth of mine?
 And I will give my days i' the sun
 For that great song of thine.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

FROM "THE BOOKMAN'S AVALON." *

A Y, come ye hither to this pleasant land,
 For here in truth are vines of Engaddi,
 Here golden urns of manna to thine hand,
 And rocks whence honey flows deliciously ;
 Udders from which comes frothing copiously
 The milk of life, ears filled with sweetest grains,
 And fig-trees knowing no sterility ;
 Here Paradisal streams make rich the plains,
 O ! come and bathe therein, ye book-enamoured
 swains.

Is thy desire for Bibles Mazarin ?
 Here are the very types that printed them.
 Or doth Dutch Coster thy allegiance win ?
 Here are the holy shrines of Haarlem.
 Sigh you to touch the extremest healing hem
 Of "Golden Legend" or of "Game of Chess" ?
 Here are such stores as you shall straigh
 contemn,
 The paltry "fragments" some of us caress,
 And more, it shall be yours to touch that sacred press

Love you colossi of the Plantin mould ?
 Here in his quaint old print-rooms may you
 dream,
 Pull at the presses of his men of old,
 Muse o'er the proof-sheets of some school-
 man's theme

* The first stanza is paraphrased from Richard de Bury.

Garnered in ancient drawers ; and you may
deem
The *typographici* on holiday,
And that to-morrow the old rooms will teem
With the old life, in the old busy way—
Just as if all the years had never slipped away.

* * * * *

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS.

WHEN do I love you most, sweet books of
mine ?

In strenuous morns when o'er your leaves I pore,
Austerely bent to win austerest lore,
Forgetting how the dewy meadows shine ;
Or afternoons when honeysuckles twine
About the seat, and to some dreamy shore
Of old Romance, where lovers evermore
Keep blissful hours, I follow at your sign ?

Yea ! ye are precious then, but most to me
Ere lamplight dawneth, when low croons the fire
To whispering twilight in my little room,
And eyes read not, but sitting silently
I feel your great hearts throbbing deep in quire,
And hear you breathing round me in the gloom.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

WITH PIPE AND BOOK.

WITH Pipe and Book at close of day,
O ! what is sweeter, mortal, say !

It matters not what book on knee,

Old Izaak or the Odyssey,

It matters not meerschaum or clay.

And though one's eyes will dream astray,

And lips forget to sue or sway,

It is "enough to merely Be,"

With Pipe and Book.

What though our modern skies be grey,

As bards aver, I will not pray

For "soothing Death" to succour me,

But ask thus much, O Fate, of thee,—

A little longer here to stay

With Pipe and Book.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

A BOOKMAN'S COMPLAINT OF HIS
LADY.

MY lady oftentimes chideth me
Because I love so much to be
Amid my honest folios.

"Thou lovest more to pore on those"—

In pretty scorn she sometimes saith—

"Than on thy mistress' eyes, i' faith !

Small good true lovers gain meseems

From dust and must of printed reams.'

Ah ! would that I could make her see,

What is so clear to thee and me,

How much our happy love-life owes
To those poor honest folios.
She little dreams that hidden there
I found a glass that mirrored her,
A magic glass which showed her me
As my own soul's ideal She,
Long ere we met and wedded eyes
Or made a soft exchange of sighs.
Nor knoweth she that thence I drew
The thought that, sweet as morning dew
Changeth the leaden life to gold,
And keepeth Love from growing old.
Nor may I tell what things beside
Within those leathern covers hide.
How would she scorn my small deceit,
Dare I confess that fine conceit
That pleased her so the other day,
Was from an old-world roundelay ;
And many another charm and grace
That keeps Love young in spite of days,
Was but a bloom that long had lain
'Mid yellow pages young again.

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.



AN INSCRIPTION.

HAVE you loved the good books of the world,—
And written none ?
Have you loved the great poet,—
And burnt your little rhyme ?
“ O be my friend, and teach me to be thine.”

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

"APOLLO'S GARDEN."

VERSE of my own ! why ask so poor a thing,
 When I might gather from the garden-ways
 Of sunny memory fragrant offering
 Of deathless blooms and white unwithering
 sprays ?

Shakespeare had given me an English rose,
 And honeysuckle Spenser sweet as dew,
 Or I had brought you from that dreamy close
 Keats' passion-blossom, or the mystic blue
 Star-flower of Shelley's song, or shaken gold
 From lilies of the Blessed Damozel,
 Or stolen fire from out the scarlet fold
 Of Swinburne's poppies—yet it seemeth well,
 Though all this flowery largess waitèd thee,
 That you should ask a paltry weed from me !

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.



A LIBRARY IN A GARDEN.

"A Library in a Garden ! The phrase seems to
 contain the whole felicity of man."

EDMUND GOSSE.

A WORLD of books amid a world of green,
 Sweet song without, sweet song again within !
 Flowers in the garden, in the folios too :
 O happy Bookman, let me live with you !

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

BALLADE OF THE *CAXTON HEAD*.

NEWS ! Good News ! at the old year's end :
 Lovers of learning, come buy, come buy !

Now to old Holborn let bookmen wend,

Though the town be grimy, and grim the sky.

News ! Good News ! is our Christmas cry ;

For our feast of reason is richly spread,

And hungry bookmen may turn and try

The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

Let moralists talk of the lifelong friend ;

But books are the safest of friends, say I !

The best of good fellows will oft offend ;

But books can never do wrong : for why ?

To their lover's ear, and their lover's eye,

They are ever the same as in dear years fled ;

And the choicest haunt, till you bid them fly,

The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

In one true fellowship see them blend !

The delicate pages of Italy ;

Foulis and Baskerville, bad to lend ;

And the strong black letter of Germany :

Here rare French wonders of beauty lie,

Wrought by the daintiest of hands long dead :

All these are waiting, till you draw nigh

The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

L'ENVOI.

Bookmen ! whose pleasures can never die,

While books are written, and books are read :

For the honour of Caxton, pass not by

The famous *Sign* of the *Caxton Head*.

LIONEL JOHNSON.

MODERN APPRECIATION.

LET others praise the bards who, if inspired,
 To realms unknown have long ago retired.
 Be mine to hymn the minor poets' pages,
 Song's latest gift from out the deathless ages ;
 In vellum covers or some dainty dress,
 With classic imprint "At the Chiswick Press" ;
 Or others who emerge each month, 'tis said,
 From Vigo Street—yea, from the Bodley Head.
 How gay their gilding, and their margins wide,
 If one by any chance should peep inside !
 How neat their printing, neater still their rhymes,
 Neatest of all their spirits are at times !
 With quips and cranks in mode of long ago,
 Ballade and virelai or blithe rondeau ;
 Or some there be so "decadent" they scorn
 The rhyme and rhythm of an art outworn,
 Burlesquing Whitman as with assonance,
 They jolt along in clownish, clumsy dance.
 Here, like a dragonfly mid swarms of midges,
 Our new Elizabethan, *Robert Bridges* ;
Kipling, the skipper of the later crew,
 Our captain on a voyage that's alway new ;
Henley, magician, who can deftly make
 The meanest words a new enchantment take :
 With *Stevenson*, "our Louis,"—all too brief
 His pages are, one lingers on each leaf.
 Among the rest how mightily these loom,
 Though on my shelves they take but scanty room.
 Here's *Lord de Tabley*, gay in green and gold,
 With *Rickett's* fantasies in fashion old.
 Next *Q's* "Green Bays," and then a row in green,

With kittle cattle, fattest kine and lean ;
Miles' huge anthology bulks heavily,
"Poets and Poetry of the Century."
Le Gallienne's "English Poems," and laid upon it
"Volumes in Folio" and "My Ladies' Sonnet."
George Moore with "Pagan Poems" and "Flowers
of Passion" ;

The earliest warbler in the latest fashion,
Which, setting deadly sins in suave verse,
Smashes one decalogue to frame a worse.
Oscar! the lover of the jewelled word,
Whose pages by rude hands are seldom stirred.
Gale, who with milkmaids and in orchards blowing
Sets Herrick's daffodils again a-growing.
Next to him *Symons*, with his "Silhouettes"
And "Days and Nights." What chosen epithets
Shall mark twin-singers of the rhymes concealed
Beneath the pseudonym of *Michael Field*?
Then *Watson's* "Epigrams," and "Wordsworth's
Grave,"

With other poems Time must surely save ;
So, too, assured from harm by jealous Fates,
One thinks must stay the Celtic rhymes of *Yeats*,
With *Graham Tomson's* books, the sweet "Bird-
Bride"

And "Summer Night" safe nestling side by side.
Near "Silverpoints," a volume by *John Gray*,
Precious inside and out, in every way,
Like *Sayle's* last book, "Musa Consolatrix" . . .
But now my Pegasus against the pricks
Kicks out like Balaam's steed, and says to me,
"Urge me no longer, for no end I see."

So here, in short, on rows of groaning shelves
 Are scores of books that ought to sing themselves.
 Not mine to hymn these hundreds who exist
 Upon the minor poets' long-drawn list.
 Some few I love, yet still each first edition
 Wait's but the triumph of my true ambition ;
 When catalogues announce it "very rare,"
 I take the hint ; ye high gods, hear my prayer,
 Raise but the market value of my store,
 I'll sell them all, and then—I'll buy some more !

HART A. KING.



A ROMAN SINGER.

"Horatius Flaccus, B.C. 8.
 There's not a doubt about the date,—
 You're dead and buried."

AUSTIN DOBSON.

A DUODECIMO in yellow boards,
 Red linen back and light-blue paper-label ;
 "Horace by Francis,"—this it is affords
 The "guardian keys" to fancies that enable
 Me to draw boldly on the Muse's hoards ;—
 Even his little volume on my table.

The title neatly lettered—pen and ink ;
 Edges uncut, by Time and touch soiled sadly ;
 Within, a portrait—copper-plate, I think—
 Engraved by W. Wise,—the eyes look badly
 (The poet *had* weak eyes) and seem to blink :
 They would have welcomed spectacles right
 gladly.

The next page shows two lovers,—'neath the
twain

This couplet, cut in slim italics faintly :—

"*Clear was the Night, the face of Heaven Serene,*"

(The capitals are introduced here quaintly,—)

"*Bright shone the Moon (a)midst her starry
train.*"

The whole effect more classical than saintly—

As is befitting. Then the publishers :—

"F. & J. Allman, Gt. Queen Str't,"—and after,

"Lincoln's Inn Fields,"—the which all here occurs

Sandwiched 'twixt "London" and the date,—

as laughter

Breaks between merry sayings and defers

Utterance of *bons mots* that will shake the rafter.

The date aforesaid : 1826,—

Which makes it eight-and-fifty golden summers

Or silver winters, since from out the mix

Of a town bookstall, open to all comers,

Some scholar bought it and burnt midnight wicks

Perusing it and sipping strong punch "rummers."

A short "Life" of the author comes before

The "Odes" and "Satires" and "Epistles,"

telling

The story of his feeting in the war

At Philippi ;—how he desired a dwelling

Far from the crowd, and how his head was hoar

At forty, and his figure roundly swelling

To comfortable stoutness, which agreed

With his small stature and convivial manner ;

All these particulars we herein read ;—

Likewise how he was sure that on the banner
Of Fame his rhymes would down the ages speed.
(*His* muse had more than flattery to fan her.)

Then, too, this tiny volume (on my soul !

'Tis gossip) tells how great Augustus Cæsar
Sent him a "little, short, thick" book or scroll,
And, veiling the mild tyrant in the teaser,
Compared the poet to the parchment roll,—
(This from Suetonius unto you and me, sir.)

Thrice happy bard, to win Mæcenæ's heart !

Small wonder that thou perished in thy sorrow
At his decease. When such rare spirits part
It is to meet again upon the morrow—
As when one drinks a cup of deadliest art,
Another from dead lips his death may borrow.

Rest thou in peace ! Thy soul within my hand
Waits to commune with a congenial spirit.
Methinks Time's slender thread of glittering sand
Runs upward in the hour-glass. I can hear it
Leading away the barrier years that stand
Between this age and thine, as I draw near it.

CHARLES HENRY LÜDERS.



A BOOK.

A GOOD book is a friend ; the best of friends,
That cannot be estranged or take offence
Howe'er neglected, but returns at will
With the old friendship.

W. J. LINTON.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

WITH childish glee he hugs his new-found
prize—

His grand *trouvaille*. He carols forth his joy,
“’Twas cheap as dirt ! Oh, let me feast mine
eyes !”

And lover-like he gloats upon his toy ;
His cup is full : his bliss has no alloy.
Then sobers him an anxious sad surmise,
Is it complete ? To well-thumbed Lowndes he
hies,
Alluring Lowndes, the bibliophile’s decoy.

“What not in Lowndes ! O treasure rich and
rare !”

He chortles in an ecstasy divine,
And thinks aloud, “Unerring scent is mine :
The Grolier Club ? ah, how the boys will stare !”

Renews his search and then indeed looks blue,—
“Should have six plates”—and his has only
two !

HALKETT LORD.



ROMANTIC RECOLLECTIONS.

WHEN I lay in a cradle and suck’d a coral
I lov’d romance in my childish way ;
And stories, with or without a moral,
Were welcome as ever the flowers in May.

For love of the false I learnt my spelling,
And brav'd the perils of A B C ;
While matters of fact were most repelling,
Romance was pleasant as aught could be.

My reading took me to desert islands,
And buried me deep in Arabian Nights ;
Sir Walter led me amongst the Highlands,
Or into the thickest of Moslem fights.
I found the elder Dumas delightful—
Before the son had eclipsed the dad,
And Harrison Ainsworth finely frightful,
And Fenimore Cooper far from bad.

A few years later I took to reading
The morbid stories of Edgar Poe—
Not healthy viands for youthful feeding
(And all my advisers told me so).
But, healthy or not, I enjoyed them vastly ;
My feverish fancy was nightly fed
Upon horrible crimes and murders ghastly,
Which sent me terrified off to bed.

Well, what with perils upon the prairies,
And haunted ruins and ghosts in white,
And wars with giants and gifts from fairies,
At last I came to be crazed outright ;
And, many a time, in my nightly slumbers,
Bearing a glove as a lady's gage,
I held the list against countless numbers,
After the style of the darkest age.

I am changed at present ; the olden fever
Has left my brain in a sounder state ;
In commonplace I'm a firm believer,
And hunt for figures and fact and date.
I have lost a lot of my old affection
For books on which I was wont to feed,
But still I can thrill at the recollection
Of mystery, magic, and martial deed.

HALKETT LORD.



"IO GROLIERII ET AMI-CORUM."

IF borrowed books but home returned again !
Or did they from their wandering escape
In pristine grace, with no deflow'ring stain,
No dog's-eared leaf, no binding all agape !
Against my wish my action thus I shape :
Like all true hearts, to share my treasures fain,
I'd gladly lend—but parting's sad sweet pain.
Ah, Grolier ! Would thy motto I might ape !

No faint half-heart, no grudging spirit thine :
No boastful vaunt, to further private ends,
The never-dying, gold-emblazoned line
That tells the world thy books were for thy friends.

But yet, methinks, to cynic eyes it looks
As though thy friends out-numberèd thy books.

HALKETT LORD.

A HUNTING SONG.

LET sons of Nimrod, mighty men,
The "painter" hunt, the grizzly bear,
Or beard the lion in his den,
Or rouse the tiger from his lair ;

Destroy the slender, graceful musk,
The kangaroo of deadly kick,
The crested boar with cruel tusk,
Or river horse of hide so thick.

Let those who hurl the swift harpoon
Enjoy the "flurry" of the whale,
Let darkies tree the sly racoon,
And gourmets track the toothsome snail.

Let "sportsmen" hunt the savage hare,
By scores the ruthless pigeon shoot,
The fiery untamed rabbit snare,
Or bait the frumious-bandicoot.

A nobler quest is ours by far,
A hunt, though "still," that calls for grit ;
For none escape without a scar,
And most of us get badly "bit."

No useless sacrifice we make,
Though hot the scent and fast the pace ;
No life of bird, or beast, we take,
Though blood be up, and keen the chase.

Our quarry—books—the Elzevir,
The scarce De Worde, the rare De Bry,
The early Block Book, quaint and queer,
Machlinia, or old Le Bee.

Types of Guinta, Gerard Leu,
Colard Mansion, Baskerville,
Ulric Han, or John Letou,
Primers parchment bound by Hyll.

The copy tall, the stainless marge,
The edge uncut by binder's plough,
The letter black, the paper large,
The cuts of Bewick, maps of Blaeu.

The catenati with their chains,
Le Gascon's fairy filmy grace,
And books in which poor Roger Payne's
Square solid handiwork we trace.

Chefs d'œuvre of Eve, so hard to meet,
Of Padeloup, Duseuil, Derome,
The daisies gold of Marguérite,
Du Barry's rose-enveloped tome.

The abbé Cotin's twining C's,
The blazoned bees of Jacques de Thou,
Grolier's generous *devise*,
The "human skin" of Doc. A—skew.

All these with ardour we pursue,
We struggle hard to lead the van,
The game's in sight ! A view halloo !
The Devil take the hindmost man.

HALKETT LORD.



THE OLD SCHOOL-BOOKS.

WHAT pleasant memories cluster round these
volumes old and worn,
With covers smirched and bindings creased, and
thumbed and torn !
These are the books we used to con, I and poor
brother Will,
When we were boys together in the school-house
on the hill !
Well I recall the nights at home, when side by
side we sat
Before the fire, and o'er these books indulged in
whispered chat.
And how, when father chided us for idling time
away,
Our eyes bent to the task as though they'd never
been astray.
The old-time proverbs scribbled here, the caution
to beware
("Steal not this book, my honest friend") scrawled
roughly here and there,
The blurs, the blots, the luncheon spots, the
numberless dog's ears,
The faded names, the pictures, and, alas ! the
stains of tears—
All take me back in mind to days when cloudless
was the sky,
When grief was so short-lived I smiled before my
tears were dry ;
When, next to father's angry frown, I feared the
awful nod

That doomed me, trembling, to advance and
humbly kiss the rod.
How bright those days ! Our little cares, our
momentary fears,
And e'en our pains, evanished with a burst of
sobs and tears,
And every joy seemed great enough to balance all
our woe ;
What pity that, when griefs are real, they can't be
balanced so !
The school-house stands in ruins now, the boys
have scattered wide ;
A few are old and grey like me, but nearly all
have died ;
And brother Will is one of these ; his curly head
was laid
Down by the brook, at father's side, beneath the
willow's shade.
These books, so quaint and queer to you, to me
are living things ;
Each tells a story of the past, and each a message
brings.
Whene'er I sit, at eventide, and turn their pages
o'er,
They seem to speak in tones that thrilled my heart
in days of yore.
The school-boy of to-day would laugh, and throw
these old books by :
But, think you, neighbour, could his heart consent
if he were I ?

R. W. McALPINE.

A BALLADE OF BOOK-MAKING.

WHEN wise Koheleth long ago—
Though when and how the pundits
wrangle—

Complained of books, and how they grow
And twist poor mankind's brains a-tangle,
He did not dream the fatal fangle
To such a pitch would e'er extend,
And such a world of paper mangle—
Of making books there is no end.

The poets weep for last year's snow,
About the porch the schoolmen dangle,
The owl-like eyes of science glow
O'er arc, hypotheruse, and angle ;
The playwrights mouth, the preachers jangle,
The critics challenge and defend,
And Fiction turns the Muses' mangle—
Of making books there is no end.

Where'er we turn, where'er we go,
The books increase, the bookmen brangle :
Our bookshelves groan with row on row
Of nonsense typed in neat quadrangle.
Better to burn the lot and twangle
An honest banjo ; better tend
To ride and box and shoot and angle—
Of making books there is no end.

ENVOY.

Few books are worth a copper spangle :
Come forth, and choose, my dusty friend,
The ranchman's rope, the nautch-girl's bangle—
Of making books there is no end.

JUSTIN HUNTLEY MCCARTHY.



MY BOOKS.

ON level lines of woodwork stand
My books obedient to my hand ;
And Cæsar pale against the wall
Smiles sternly Roman over all.
Within the four walls of this room
Life finds its prison, youth its tomb :
For here the minds of other men
Prompt and deride the labouring pen ;
And here the wisdom of the wise
Dances like motes before the eyes.
Outside, the great world spins its way,
Here studious night dogs studious day.
A mighty store of dusty books,
Little and great, fill all the nooks,
And line the walls from roof to floor ;
And I who read them o'er and o'er,
Am I much wiser than of old,
When sunlight leaped like living gold
Into my boyhood's heart, on fire
With fervid hope and wild desire ;
And when behind no window bars,
But free as air I served the stars ?

JUSTIN HUNTLEY MCCARTHY.

A CLOSED BOOK.

I TURN the leaves over, page by page,
 Then I close the book with a sudden pang.
 You read me that poem,—some long past age !
 I remember yet how the dear voice rang.

Will the book have sorrow that darkness lies
 Pressed down on the leaves where the words are
 writ ?

Will it cry with a yearning to see the eyes
 That once looked light to the heart of it ?

If my heart could be closed thus, shut like a book,
 Forgetful of you, and the eyes that beam,—
 But you wakened life with the love of your look,
 And I in my darkness must dream and dream.

WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE.



DE LIBRIS.

TRUE—there are books and books. There's
 Gray,
 For instance, and there's Bacon ;
 There's Longfellow, and Monstrelet,
 And also Colton's " Lacon,"
 With " Laws of Whist," and those of Libel,
 And Euclid, and the Mormon Bible.

And some are dear as friends, and some
 We keep because we need them ;
And some we ward from worm and thumb,
 And love too well to read them.
My own are poor, and mostly new,
But I've an Elzevir or two.

That as a gift is prized, the next
 For trouble in the finding ;
This Aldine for its early text,
 That Plantin for the binding ;
This sorry Herrick hides a flower,
The record of one perfect hour.

But whether it be worth or looks
 We gently love or strongly,
Such virtue doth reside in books
 We scarce can love them wrongly ;
To sages an eternal school,
A hobby (harmless) to the fool.

Nor altogether fool is he
 Who orders, free from doubt,
Those books which " no good library
 Should ever be without,"
And blandly locks the well-glazed door
On tomes that issue never more.

Less may we scorn his cases grand,
 Where safely, surely linger
Fair virgin fields of type, unscanned
 And innocent of finger,
There rest, preserved from dust accurst,
The first editions—and the worst.

And least of all should we that write
 With easy jest deride them,
 Who hope to leave, when "lost to sight,"
 The best of us inside them.
 Dear shrines ! where many a scribbler's name
 Has lasted—longer than his fame.

COSMO MONKHOUSE.



L'ENVOI.

HERE are we for the last time face to face,
 Thou and I, Book, before I bid thee
 speed

Upon that perilous journey to that place
 For which I have done on thee pilgrim's weed,
 Striving to get thee all things for thy need—
 — I love thee, whatso time or men may say
 Of the poor singer of an empty day.

Good reason why I love thee, e'en if thou
 Be mocked or clean forgot as time wears on ;
 For ever as thy fashioning did grow,
 Kind word and praise because of thee I won
 From those without whom were my world all gone,
 My hope fallen dead, my singing cast away,
 And I set soothly in an empty day.

I love thee ; yet this last time must it be
 That thou must hold thy peace and I must speak,
 Lest if thou babble I begin to see
 Thy gear too thin, thy limbs and heart too weak,
 To find the land thou goest forth to seek—

—Though what harm if thou die upon the way,
Thou idle singer of an empty day?

But though this land desired thou never reach,
Yet folk who know it mayst thou meet, or death ;
Therefore a word unto thee would I teach
To answer these, who, noting thy weak breath,
Thy wandering eyes, thy heart of little faith,
May make thy fond desire a sport and play,
Mocking the singer of an empty day.

That land's name, say'st thou? and the road
thereto?

Nay, Book, thou mockest, saying thou know'st it
not ;

Surely no book of verse I ever knew
But ever was the heart within him hot
To gain the Land of Matters Unforgot,—
There, now we both laugh,—as the whole world may,
At us poor singers of an empty day.

Nay, let it pass, and hearken ! Hast thou heard
That therein I believe I have a friend,
Of whom for love I may not be afeard?
It is to him indeed I bid thee wend ;
Yea, he perchance may meet thee ere thou end,
Dying so far off from the hedge of bay,
Thou idle singer of an empty day !

Well, think of him, I bid thee, on the road,
And if it hap that midst of thy defeat,
Fainting beneath thy follies' heavy load,
My master, GEOFFREY CHAUCER, thou do meet,
Then shalt thou win a space of rest full sweet ;

Then be thou bold, and speak the words I say,
The idle singer of an empty day !

* * * * *

[*The seven stanzas omitted here contain the Book's
address to Chaucer.*]

Fearest thou, Book, what answer thou mayst
gain

Lest he should scorn thee, and thereof thou die ?
Nay, it shall not be.—Thou mayst toil in vain,
And never draw the House of Fame anigh ;
Yet he and his shall know whereof we cry,
Shall call it not ill done to strive to lay
The ghosts that crowd about life's empty day.

Then let the others go ! and if indeed
In some old garden thou and I have wrought,
And made fresh flowers spring up from hoarded seed,
And fragrance of old days and deed have brought
Back to folk weary ; all was not for nought.
—No little part it was for me to play—
The idle singer of an empty day.

WILLIAM MORRIS.



TO G. LAURENCE GOMME, F.S.A., ON HIS
PRESENTING ME WITH A COPY OF
ANDREW LANG'S "LETTERS TO DEAD
AUTHORS."

O FRIEND, receive my thanks for Letters writ
To Authors Dead by Andrew Lang, who
writes

To each dead master in the strain most fit
To speak his loving homage, and indites

Therewith memorials of his perfect taste
And soul of art in times of shallow haste.

If chosen friends reveal the mind of man,
That seeks for fellows of its noblest powers,
A hero's mind beneath the words we scan
Here clothes itself for us in learning's flowers ;
Not less heroic for that undismayed
Its deepest thought in smiles it has arrayed.

The age is dull for all its wealth, and sad ;
Man's nimble spirit 'neath a blight e'en droops
Of luxury, where wit its domain had
In times of patches, farthingales and hoops :
While penury, with labour yoked, can see
No heaven on earth save that same luxury !

In such a time, my friend, it is most good
To meet a mind so full and yet so calm,
To sit and taste the literary food
That fed this mind, and share its balm :
The glancing wit of other realms and times
Doth Andrew Lang give us in prose and rhymes !

Ah ! when some future Andrew writes to *him*,
How rapturously he'll applaud that style
That flushes now the heights, and now a whim
Or paradox will try to make us smile !
The Immortals call—but, Andrew, stay on earth,
That of bright wit there be no longer dearth !

T. FAIRMAN ORDISH.

OLD BOOKS.

A THRESHER prime is Father Time !
When harvest loads his wain,
He beats the hollow husks aside
And hoards the golden grain.

A winnower is Father Time !
The chaff he blows away ;
The sweetest seed he treasures up
For many a year and day.

Oh, very wise is Father Time !
His flail is tried and true ;
I love the garnered pile of books
He's winnowed through and through.

SELINA WARE PAINE.



AMONG MY BOOKS.

A MONG my books—what rest is there
From wasting woes ! what balm for care !
If ills appal or clouds hang low,
And drooping dim the fleeting show,
I revel still in visions rare.

At will I breathe the classic air,
The wanderings of Ulysses share ;
Or see the plume of Bayard flow
Among my books.

Whatever face the world may wear—
If Lilian has no smile to spare,
For others let her beauty blow ;
Such favours I can well forgo ;
Perchance forget the frowning fair
Among my books.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK.



INFLUENCE OF BOOKS.

IN the still book-world rests the noiseless hour
That moves the noisy throngèd world for
ever.

JOHN JAMES PIATT.



WRITTEN IN THE "GOLDEN TREASURY
OF SONGS AND LYRICS."

HIDDEN here with hearts of song,
Live the poets, always young ;—
Read them, Mabel, through and through :
They will give their hearts to you.

ERNEST RHYS.



WRITTEN IN A COPY OF WORDSWORTH.

IN the hottest crowd, when grace
Seems to hide her maiden face,
Here you'll find a mystic voice
Full of heaven's supernal noise,
And a breath of mountain wind
Rustling in the leaves you'll find :

In the world's seducing clan
 It shall be your talisman,—
 Keep it, Percy, long in honour
 Of its author (and its donor) !

ERNEST RHYS.



IN THE MASTER'S ROOM.

THE business of the day is done,
 A pipe emits a faint perfume ;
 The master of the house hath won
 His quiet hour within his room.

The flames upon the hearth at play
 Bring out the pictures on the wall,
 The papers piled in disarray,
 The books that on each other fall.

Each volume wears a kindly face,
 As of a true and trusty friend ;
 Battered maybe, devoid of grace,
 But frank of converse, free to lend.

Dryden and "Druid," side by side,
 The poet and the sportsman pen ;
 See Nana, blushing, seek to hide
 Behind a row of Reverend men.

A lawyer's lease has business with
 A manuscript of schoolboy rhymes ;
 Beneath the works of Adam Smith
 Are copies of the *Sporting Times*.

To meet the light there lowly stoop
 Some copies of Salvator's views ;
 In yon alcove's a marble group,
 A Nymph, a Naiad, and a Muse.

Near Paley's placid brow a brush—
 (Eh ! but it was a stout old fox)—
 Nell Gwynne is making Cromwell blush,
 Queen Mary has a smile for Knox.

What dynasties domestic reign,
 What cook may come, what governess go,
 Here is the master's small domain,
Imperium in imperio.

C. C. RHYS.



TWO BOOKS.

BRIGHT as the crimson glow when love
 First sends a missive to a maiden,
 Keen as the miser's glance above
 A bag with golden moneys laden ;
 So bright upon the author's cheek,
 So keen beneath the author's brow,
 The glow and glance that plainly speak
 His book in print has reached him now.

His book—his first-born—(who does not
 Some little paper thing remember
 That formed a young life's beauty spot
 From January to December ?)

How tenderly he turns the leaves
 That have for him a nameless charm,
 And reads from them on summer eves
 To some one hanging on his arm !

How Nature seems to share his joy !
 How every breeze to whisper presage
 Of future fame to glad the boy,
 As boy-like he receives the message !
 Mind like a fountain overflows
 With wisdom, fancy, wealth of thought,
 Ere yet the world with all its woes
 The lesson of his life has taught.

* * * * *

The lesson of his life he's learned ;
 Well-worn is now that writing-table ;
 The visions of his youth have turned
 (As visions will) into a fable.
 He's very old. His head is white,—
 His hand is weary, heart is sore.
 He's very old. Yet must he write ;—
 The printer's devil's at the door.

He thinks this book must be his last ;—
 'Twill pay his funeral expenses ;—
 His energy for work is past,
 A numbness stiffens all his senses.
 When suddenly all pain has gone !
 At sight of some few flowers of spring
 A kindly hand has laid upon
 His table—they such memories bring.

The Bookworm's Pledge. 101

He writes. A flower of faded breath
Falls where the last uncertain line is ;
And lo ! it is the pen of Death
That on the page has written " Finis."
The lamp is out. Poor slave, farewell !
You and your work have had their day.
No published line your end shall tell ;—
That printer's boy can go his way.

C. C. RHYS.



THE BOOKWORM'S PLEDGE.

I PLEDGED my word this morning,
As I started down the street,
That not a single book I'd buy—
For me a wondrous feat.

As I wandered past the windows
Of the news-stands on the way,
With scarce a wish to purchase,
I my mandate could obey.

But temptation, ever ready
To hold her victims fast,
In the guise of an old book store,
Filled with relics of the past,

Dawned upon my willing vision,
And I thought she'll never mind
If I glance within a moment
And perhaps some treasure find.

Ah, behold how fortune teases,
What a glorious prize is here !
First edition, not a blemish,
Rare old volume of Shakespeare.

Ah, I pledged my word this morning,
And to keep it I will try,
But the gods will frown upon me
Should I let that chance pass by.

There on yonder shelf inviting
Rests a missal old and quaint,
Relic of the Gothic ages
Scanned by some mediæval saint ;

Missal with the blazoned pages,
Triumph of the ancient art,
With your worn old vellum covers,
How you tempt my sinful heart !

Close beside it, dim and dusty,
Bearing imprint of the years
They have whirled along life's current,
Stand two priceless Elzevirs.

I pledged my word this morning,
But the keeping is too dear ;
I would be far more than mortal,
Could I leave those volumes here.

Shades of bookmen who behold me,
Oh, forgive my perjured self ;
You would leave your seat in glory
For a peep at yonder shelf.

C. D. RAYMER.

A POOR AUTHOR TO HIS BOOKS.

DEAR comrades! though ye figure not in
Lowndes

(Thy costlier brethren long have left their home),
How are ye ravished from me, tome by tome,
For fewer shillings than ye cost me pounds!
Shades of unthrifty authors! Hark, it sounds!
My portal tells, a tedious metronome,
Of sullen duns who onewhile forced to roam
Kit Marlowe, Savage, Johnson, Goldsmith:
Zounds!

Dim days of quiet pleasure that are fled!
Once, snugly harboured, dallying by turns
With new and old, in such pure peace I read
As one who, want unknowing, idly learns.
Now in yon gaping casement widely spread
Stand Shakespeare only, Landor, Lamb and
Burns.

ERNEST RADFORD.



THE CENSOR.

SHE'S a priestess of Minerva,
With a scorn of lighter things;
And no idle smile can swerve her,
For she guards Pierian springs;
And she draws the sparkling waters
For the learned and the weak,
Giving maidens "Beauty's Daughters,"
And professors crabbed Greek.

In the library Fate's thrust her—
 A sweet symphony in grey,
 With soft eyes whose brilliant lustre
 Fairly takes one's breath away.
 But still she really seems to know
 Each of the weighty tomes
 That range from Kipling to De Foe,
 From Homer up to Holmes.

If I ask for Herbert Spencer,
 Or for Plato or Carlyle,
 I can catch the pretty censor
 In a faint approving smile ;
 But at Anna Karénina,
 Or the gay *contes* of France,
 She wears a cold demeanour,
 And a blushing, downcast glance.

HARRY ROMAINE.



WALDEN.

IN swift and sudden dreams each night I greet
 The host of friends that in my heart I bear ;
 I chat in paradox with Baudelaire,
 I talk with Gautier of the obsolete—
 My absinthe and De Musset's brandy meet ;
 And by some special favour here and there,
 Now with Elaine and now with Guinevere,
 I pass the day in some serene retreat.
 Heine's malicious eyes have gazed in mine,
 And I have sat at Leopardi's feet.

And once I heard the lute-strung song divine
That Sappho and the Lesbian girls repeat,
But yet, what night have I not sought in vain
To meet and muse with Emerson again ?

EDGAR SALTUS.



AKOSMISM.

AS one who to some long-locked chamber goe ,
And listens there to what the dead have said,
So there are moments when my thoughts are led
To those dull chronicles whose pages close
Epochs and ages in the same repose
That shall the future as the past o'erspread,
And where but Memory may tend the dead,
Or prune the ivy where once grew the rose.
And as there to me from their pages streams
The incoherent story of the years,
The aimlessness of all we undertake,
I think our lives are surely but the dreams
Of spirits dwelling in the distant spheres,
Who, as we die, do one by one awake.

EDGAR SALTUS.



THE MARRIAGE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE.

(ED. ANDREW LANG.)

On the Fly-leaf.

CURSÈD be he who robs me of this book,
With all his race. Let it be desolate
And brought a-low if so be it was great,
For that he, wickedly, impiously took

That was another's. Let great serpents look
 At him, a-sleeping, with dull eyes of Hate ;
 And let him, waking, be compelled of Fate
 To cast his corse within the nearest brook.
 Here is a book made after mine own heart—
 Good print, good tale, good picture and good
 sense,
 Good learning and good labour of old days.
 Book ! thou and I henceforth must nowise part.
 Together we will tread Life's journey hence,
 And only part at old Death's waterways.

CHARLES SAYLE.



DEMANDING AN INSCRIPTION IN AN
 "OMAR KHAYYAM."

To J. H. B.

HASTE, Jack, to write your name in yonder
 book :

And yet write not, for when you are a-near
 No need there is of pen and ink to cheer
 Our meeting. And yet write, for herein, look,
 There is upon this page a tempting nook
 Where you shall hum a quatrain clear and dear
 To him who holds your book in after year :—
 Write it I swear you shall by hook or crook.
 Nay, write it not, for what may prove to be
 Most perfect is the fittest. So put back
 Our Omar, *sans* inscription, on the shelf.
 What need is there of further poesy
 When all our lifetime we've possession, Jack,
 Of one more perfect poem,—of yourself ?

CHARLES SAYLE.

TRIOLET OF THE BIBLIOPHILE.

BE it mine to peruse
 Old prints and editions ;
 Books our fathers might use
 Be it mine to peruse.
 Let others hunt news
 And go mad about missions :—
 Be it mine to peruse
 Old prints and editions.

CHARLES SAYLE.



IN THE LIBRARY.

FROM the oriels one by one
 Slowly fades the setting sun ;
 On the marge of afternoon
 Stands the new-born crescent moon ;
 In the twilight's crimson glow
 Dim the quiet alcoves grow.
 Drowsy-lidded Silence smiles
 On the long deserted aisles ;
 Out of every shadowy nook
 Spirit faces seem to look,
 Some with smiling eyes, and some
 With a sad entreaty dumb ;
 He who shepherded his sheep
 On the wild Sicilian steep,
 He above whose grave are set
 Sprays of Roman violet ;
 Poets, sages,—all who wrought
 In the crucible of thought.

Day by day as seasons glide
 On the great eternal tide,
 Noiselessly they gather thus
 In the twilight beauteous,
 Hold communion each with each,
 Closer than our earthly speech,
 Till within the East are born
 Premonitions of the morn !

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



A POET TO HIS BOOK.

BOOK, now that thou art fain to go
 To brave the critic's gibe or blow,
 And seek if haply thou may'st find
 A smile of welcome, cordial, kind—
 One word, but one, before we part,
 And hold it, prithee, fast at heart.

If so it chance that thou shouldst meet
 No friendly glance in stall or street,
 Despair not, nor with fate demur ;
 For when the tender eyes of her
 Lean o'er thee, thou wilt wish than this
 No other meed of praise or bliss.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



THE BOOKSTALL.

IT stands in a winding street,
 A quiet and restful nook,
 Apart from the endless beat
 Of the noisy heart of Trade

There's never a spot more cool
Of a hot midsummer day
By the brink of a forest pool,
Or the bank of a crystal brook,
In the maples' breezy shade,
Than the bookstall old and grey.

Here are precious gems of thought
That were quarried long ago,
Some in vellum bound, and wrought
With letters and lines of gold ;
Here are curious rows of " calf,"
And perchance an Elzevir ;
Here are countless " mos " of chaff,
And a parchment folio,
Like leaves that are crackled with cold
All puckered and brown and sere.

In every age and clime
Live the monarchs of the brain :
And the lords of prose and rhyme,
Years after the long last sleep
Has come to the kings of earth
And their names have passed away,
Rule on through death and birth ;
And the thrones of their domain
Are found where the shades are deep,
In the bookstall old and grey.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.



CONFESSIO AMANTIS.
AMATOR : AMATA : MATER.

I.

BY the boudoir fire we're sitting,
Shadows from the fire are flitting,
Creeping, crawling, sweeping, sprawling
O'er the ceiling ; night is falling
On the dreary drizzling day ;
Kettledrum is cleared away.

II.

Half-past five : we dine at seven—
One clear hour at least of heaven.
No ; Nell has a book ! I'll find one.
Why will memory remind one
That one hasn't read a thing
Since the other evening ?

III.

Faust—by Goethe—Part the Second,—
Masterpiece by critics reckoned ;
I could never understand it,—
Could the master-mind that plann'd it ?
Two slim feet upon the mat
Interest me more than that.

IV.

" Poet at the Breakfast-Table,"
Light and vigorous and able—
Why on earth will glances wander,
With attention four times fonder,
To the shapely hands that grasp
" Enoch Arden " in their clasp ?

V.

Good ! Here is the triple story—
Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory :
Madonna Beatrice, brave old Dante,
Grace I crave for homage scanty ;
 Why should ye be dim to-night
 If a red mouth's teeth are white ?

VI.

Landor, thy belovèd pages
Bridge th' abysm of the ages ;
Yet to-night they fail their duty ;
Through Aspasia's boasted beauty,
 Like a sunrise through a wood
 Dawns sweet English maidenhood.

VII.

Let me look at something sterner,
Hallam, Stubbs, or Dawson Turner !
Grand Monarque, and Reign of Terror,
Bess's Glory, Charles's Error—
 Each in dim confusion flies,
 Scared away by two blue eyes.

VIII.

“ Adam Smith on Wealth of Nations,”
Love is lost in calculations.
Bees whose bags are full of money
Do not gather love for honey ;
 Business, enter if you dare !
 What is gold to golden hair !

IX.

“Six-fifteen? will you excuse me?”
“If your daughter won’t refuse me
Help in solving calculations
Made while reading ‘Wealth of Nations.’”
“Nellie will enjoy it.” Flown—
Nell and I are left alone!

X.

“Westward Ho!” is vastly pretty,—
Burning Frank and Rose, a pity;
Beautiful they look together
Dying. I’m not certain whether
I would not be burnt, to see
Somebody as close to me.

XI.

Nellie’s very rapt in reading;
Diligence I hate impeding,
Yet has she, for all that’s rapt her,
Not got through a single chapter.
I must beg for Nellie’s aid
Calculations to be made.

XII.

“Three years past, come this December—
(You no doubt will not remember)
I, a schoolboy, loved you madly,
Talked of dying for you gladly;
Most of all, I would declare,
Captive to your eyes and hair.

XIII.

“ Now your eyes look sweet and tender ;
Does the fireglow yield them splendour ?
And your hair shines richer golden ;
Is it to the flames beholden ?
 And your face looks very fair ;
 Have the embers influence there ?

XIV.

“ Nay, I swear, I think you're blushing—
Never fire made such a flushing.
And your eyes are bright and pelting—
Never fire made such a melting.
 Would you take it very ill,
 If I said I loved you still ?

XV.

“ Sweet, if you must fall, my bosom
Shall receive the falling blossom.
If the tears must rain, the shower
Raining here will feed the flower.
 If your weakness needs support
 Nature made me stronger for't.

XVI.

“ Kiss me, Nellie. I'll not owe it,—
No such banker as the poet ;
Nay, invest your fund of kissing—
Interest cent. per cent.—none missing.
 Tears and smiles. Just one kiss more !
 Have you looked as fair before ? ”

XVII.

By the boudoir fire we're sitting ;
 Shadows from the fire are flitting
 O'er the ceiling.—Struck eleven !
 Dinner's always sharp at seven !
 Goodness ! here is bedtime come !
 Gentle Household, blind and dumb !

DOUGLAS SLADEN.



LE ORDRE DE BEL EYSE.

1630.

FIRST we love fair ladies,
 Then we love good books ;
 Either have their virtues,
 Either have their vices ;
 These are to divert us,
 Those are to entice us ;
 Books outlive their pages,
 Ladies their good looks.

Next we love sweet music
 And the festive dance ;
 Music makes us merry,
 Dancing glows with pleasure ;
 Either salutary,
 Taken in good measure ;
 Joy's the only physic
 That is worth its pence.

And we love good liquor,
Be it from the Rhine,
Cyder press'd in Devon,
Or fat College ale.
Nectar's drunk in heaven,
Whisky by the Gael ;
Herrick—he's the Vicar—
Says they're all divine.

Last, and most devoutly,
Love we a good friend,
One to mourn and miss us
When we've burst our bubbles,
Share in our successes,
And not shun our troubles.
Whoso does this stoutly,
Love him to the end.

DOUGLAS SLADEN.



MY PRESENTATION BOOK-CASE.

(WITH APOLOGIES TO ROSSETTI'S SONNET : "A
SUPERSCRPTION.")

LOOK on my shelves—the realm of Might-
have-been :

And yet right glad am I they hold no knell,
Are undusk'd o'er with shadows of farewell--
But one and every book's alive with the sheen
Of Life and Art and what of each is seen.
Look on my shelves : lo, an enduring spell
To lure collectors' hopes intolerable :
Of loveliest thoughts and dreams the bookish
screen.

Mark me, what dust there is ! But should there
dart

Along these rows the Bookman's eager eyes

Lit with a first-edition-glow surmise—

Then shalt thou see me ope, and turn apart

These frail glazed doors, and rend thy inmost
heart

With many a rare unpurchasable prize.

WILLIAM SHARP.



SEVEN AGES OF A BOOK.

ALL the world's a book,
And all the men and women clearly
authors :

They have their contents and their indices,

And one man in his time writes many parts—

His volume having seven ages. At first

The paper, white as the frost on famous

Alpine peaks. Enriched by rapid flow

Of magic ink, sheet after sheet it gleams

With gems of thought and glistening coin

Of fancy. Then the complete script,

Paragraphed and paged, revised and neatly
bundled

For the mail, labelled with postage stamps, it goes

Direct to haunts of type and pressrooms popular.

And then the finished work, fresh from

The printer's hands, gilded on upper edge,

Well bound in skin or cloth of colours variable ;

Old School-book's Lament. 117

Side lettered and bedight with flowerets wreathed
By art's luxuriant limnings.

Then the oft-read and oft-discarded tale,

Whose crumpled, rose-stained leaves

Attest how little heed fair woman pays

To literary preservation. Then high

On shelf, amid dust's gathering grime,

The tome is placed for later reference.

Its sixth age shifts into forgotten lore—

Battered and curled and torn beyond repair ;

A cover gone ; no title left to tell

The character of work, or who were

Its producers. Last scene of all,

Which closes this strange history,

Is sad to view and borders on oblivion :

The loose and separate leaves are used

To wrap up soap or other cheap domestic requisition.

In grocer's clutch the o'er-true story ends—

Sans plot, *sans* grace, *sans* sense, *sans* form,

Sans everything.

JAQUES HENRI SHAKESQUILL.



OLD SCHOOL-BOOK'S LAMENT.

I'M a castaway fellow, all dingy and yellow,
Forsaken I lie on the dark garret floor ;
All wretched and lonely, for now I am only
A mere wreck of what was a beauty before.

My pride is all shattered, my leaves they are
battered,
And all of them cruelly scribbled and torn.
I have but one cover, they tore off the other—
And that one is dreadfully battered and worn.

An old-fashioned bonnet, a faded rose on it,
A rusty jack-knife, a shoe out at the toe,
A pile of old papers, three dirty wax tapers,
Are my only companions in these hours of woe.

Once I lived in a city, where books bright and
pretty
Were ranged in a long shining row on the shelf.
I'd an exquisite cover, gilt-lettered all over,
And not one was more beautiful there than
myself.

My next place of dwelling—I blush at the telling—
Was a schoolroom as dusty as dusty could be,
Where long I was studied, scratched, thumb-
marked and muddied,
And ruined as any one plainly can see.

But here I am lying, degraded and dying,
While old dusty cobwebs are covering me o'er,
Alone and forsaken, while naught can awaken
The glory I knew in the sweet days of yore.

LILLIE SHELDON.



THE LIBRARY.

GIVE me the room whose every nook
 Is dedicated to a book :
 Two windows will suffice for air
 And grant the light admission there ;
 One looking to the south, and one
 To speed the red departing sun ;
 The eastern wall from frieze to plinth
 Shall be the Poet's labyrinth,
 Where one may find the lords of rhyme
 From Homer's down to Dobson's time :
 And at the northern side a space
 Shall show an open chimney-place,
 Set round with ancient tiles that tell
 Some legend old, and weave a spell
 About the firedog-guarded seat,
 Where, musing, one may taste the heat :
 Above, the mantel should not lack
 For curios and bric-à-brac—
 Not much, but just enough to light
 The room up when the fire is bright.
 The volumes on the wall should be
 All prose and all philosophy,
 From Plato down to those who are
 The dim reflections of that star ;
 And these tomes all should serve to show
 How much we write—how little know ;
 For since the problem once was set
 No one has ever solved it yet.
 Upon the shelves along the west
 The scientific works shall rest,

Beside them, History ; above,—
 Religion—hope, and faith, and love :
 Lastly, the southern wall should hold
 The story-tellers, new and old ;
 Haroun al Raschid, who was truth
 And happiness to all my youth,
 Shall have the honoured place of all
 That dwell upon the sunny wall ;
 And with him there shall stand a throng
 Of those who help mankind along
 More by their fascinating lies
 Than all the learning of the wise.

Such be the library ; and take
 This motto of a Latin make,
 To grace the door through which I pass :
Hic habitat Felicitas !

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



FORGOTTEN BOOKS

OF books I sing, but not of those
 Which any Book Collector knows,—
 The priceless, rare editions, not,—
 But volumes which the World forgot
 And with them those who wrote, as well,
 Before they had a chance to sell :
 Ephemerals that find themselves
 With the Immortals on my shelves

I name no names, for if I should
None would recall them now, nor could
A word of mine bring any one
Out of its long Oblivion. -
The ink on many fly-leaves still
Looks quite as fresh as when the quill
On each inscribed an author's name,
And signed his title there to Fame,
Without one solitary fear
About its being proven clear.

One has its pages still uncut,
Clean, kept ironically shut
By him whose name therein is penned
Above : *From his devoted friend.*
And not unfrequently I come
Across the imprint of a thumb,
Or in the paragraphs I find
A pleasing sentence underlined,
Or neatly on the margin set
A compliment in epithet :
Each one of these, I'm satisfied,
Was read before its author died.

But there was one among them all,
Morocco-bound, gilt-edged, and small,
Filled with the amatory rhymes
Of ante-Tennysonian times,
Stiff in their phraseology
And rather rough in melody.
'Tis *Dedicated unto Her*
By Her Unworthie Worshipper,

And just below is written : “ *These
Many and pleasing Melodies
Dear Wm. writ in '98,
& unto Me did Dedicate.*”

This one was read and read again,
And annotated by her pen :
And this fulfilled the Author's hopes,
Repaid the toil of all his tropes,
And had, at least his span of life,
One constant reader in his wife.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



TO HIS BOOK.

GO, little book, with heart of rhyme,
This is our last leave-taking time :
For you the journey stretches long,
With naught to cheer you save a song ;
For me, alas ! when you depart,
A doubtful, desolated heart.
I have but slender hope to give
To gladden such a fugitive.
The world may greet you well or ill,
Seeing your way lies all up hill :
But o'er that summit dim and far
I catch a glimpse of one sure star
Which shines to guide you and to bring
You ever closer there to sing.
Little I care for praise or blame
Unless it whispers of her name :

Her praise is inspiration's breath ;
Her scorn were aspiration's death !
Go, then, and if she welcome you
I care not what the world may do !

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



THE FLY-LEAF TO THE READER.

FRIEND, stay your steps awhile before
You pass within the open door ;
Bethink you in what manner you
Shall greet the host ; consider, too,
How to a feast of all his best
The author here invites his guest,
To taste his meat and drink his wine,
On every dish to freely dine.
And, mind you, when you come to sit
Before the board whereon his wit
And wisdom are all spread to make
A meal for your mind's stomach's sake,
To bear yourself with dignity
And treat your host with courtesy.

If any dish before you placed
By any chance offend your taste,
Or, if the food seem wanting aught
Of proper seasoning, say naught.
Eat quietly, and when you go
Forget not gratitude to show ;

And, being gone, if you repent
The precious time that you have spent,
Or think that you have poorly fared
Upon the food and drink prepared,
Curse not this book—the wine and meat
So kindly offered you to eat.
The author, too, spare from your curse,
And do not go from bad to worse ;
You were his guest, this recollect,
And treat him only with respect.
Keep your opinions to yourself,
And put the book back on the shelf.
Think this : what one may eat, and die,
Another's taste may satisfy.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.



THE BOOK-HUNTER.

A CUP of coffee, eggs, and rolls
Sustain him on his morning strolls :
Unconscious of the passers-by,
He trudges on with downcast eye ;
He wears a queer old hat and coat,
Suggestive of a style remote ;
His manner is preoccupied,—
A shambling gait, from side to side.
For him the sleek, bright-windowed shop
Is all in vain,—he does not stop.
His thoughts are fixed on dusty shelves
Where musty volumes hide themselves,—

Rare prints of poetry and prose,
And quaintly-lettered folios,—
Perchance a parchment manuscript,
In some forgotten corner slipped,
Or monk-illuminated missal bound
In vellum with brass clasps around ;
These are the pictured things that throng
His mind the while he walks along.

A dingy street, a cellar dim,
With book-lined walls, suffices him.
The dust is white upon his sleeves ;
He turns the yellow, dog-eared leaves
With just the same religious look
That priests give to the Holy Book.
He does not heed the stifling air
If so he find a treasure there.
He knows rare books, like precious wines,
Are hidden where the sun ne'er shines ;
For him delicious flavours dwell
In books as in old Muscatel ;
He finds in features of the type
A clew to prove the grape was ripe.
And when he leaves this dismal place,
Behold, a smile lights up his face !
Upon his cheeks a genial glow,—
Within his hand Boccaccio,
A first edition worn with age,
“ *Firenze* ” on the title-page.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN.

A BALLADE OF BOOKS WELL BOUND.

FROM tattered volumes old and sere
Some friends I know evolve delight.
The shabbiest oft most prized appear
By antiquarians erudite.
These think me a Philistine wight
For liking bindings of the best ;
Yet to my taste I have a right :
I like to see my friends well drest.

I love the antique and the queer,
The curious, quaint, and recondite.
I own the spell of Elzevir,
The charm of pages Aldine hight ;
But yet, though age and dirt invite,
Their beauty is not manifest.
Let modern art put them to flight.
I like to see my friends well drest.

Of Bedford, Tout, and Rivière
I love the leathern marvels bright ;
Levant and polished calf, though dear
To purse, and dearer to the sight.
The armour of the bravest knight
Should shine the brightest on his breast ;
No rust of age should cast its blight.
I like to see my friends well drest.

L'ENVOI.

Friend, I dislike in sorry flight
To see a loved and honoured guest;
In goodly garb I'd have him dight :
I like to see my friends well drest.

HARRY B. SMITH.



WITH A COPY OF THE ILIAD.

BAYARD, awaken not this music strong
While round thy home the indolent sweet
breeze

Floats lightly as the summer breath of seas
O'er which Ulysses heard the Sirens' song !
Dreams of low-lying isles to June belong,
And Circe holds us in her haunts of ease ;
But later, when these high ancestral trees
Are sere, and such Odyssean languors wrong
The reddening strength of the autumnal year,
Yield to heroic words thine ear and eye :
Intent on these broad pages thou shalt hear
The trumpet's blare, the Argive battle-cry,
And see Achilles hurl his hurtling spear,
And mark the Trojan arrows make reply.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.



PATERNOSTER ROW.

WHO, though with soul that else were scarce
divined,

But feels it flutter as he lingers here,
And looks around ? The very atmosphere
Seems redolent and mineral of mind ;
Within ten thousand thousand cells enshrined,
From every flower that blows, what sumptuous
store !

From every varied vein of mental ore
Riches of riches of what wealth combined !

“ Our Father,” certes, of the heaven of thought,
Dispensing wide imperishable food

To hungry souls ; full fount that knows no
drought ;

Illimitable power of sovereign good,
Binding strange peoples in close brotherhood,

With bonds ne’er yet by guilds or kinship
wrought.

ROBERT STEGGALL.



AN OLD BOOKSTALL.

MOTLEY assemblage ! some but in their teens,
And others centuries old ! contrasts com-
bined—

The *magnum opus* of a sovereign mind,
Rubbing against plebeian magazines ;
Pulpit and stage, too close for go-betweens ;
Greek, cheek by jowl with Cockney ; every kind
Of raff in company the most refined ;

While Faith on Doubt and Heterodoxy leans !
Could they but speak, themselves might, haply,
tell

Full many a story, preach more wisdom, more
Of human wont, than all the literal lore
Therein compacted ; what quaint haunts have they
Not known—what various friends—what change,
decay—
Witnessed what joy and woe ineffable !

ROBERT STEGGALL



THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS.

A T evening when the lamp is lit,
Around the fire my parents sit ;
They sit at home and talk and sing,
But do not play at anything.

Now with my little gun I crawl
All in the dark around the wall,
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

There in the night, where none can spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie,
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,
These are my starry solitudes ;
And there the river by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away,
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

So when my nurse comes in for me,
Home I return across the sea,
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of story-books.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER.

SUMMER fading, winter comes—
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon ;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by
Wait upon the children's eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books

The Lay of the Wily Villain. 131

We may see how all things are,
Seas and cities, near and far,
And the flying fairies' looks
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting sage in nursery nooks
Reading picture story-books?

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.



THE LAY OF THE WILY VILLAIN.

THE furtive sneak who filches from
The bookstall's dingy rows,
Should by the ears be nailed aloft,
Along with kites and crows.

Now listen, ye who covet books,
But don't know where to buy 'em,
Of one who played much deeper tricks—
But pray don't go and try 'em.

In London's dingiest, bookiest street,
Not far off from the Strand,
There dwelt a man who dealt in books,
Short-sighted, wise and bland.

He had a partner for his help,
Far-seeing, pompous, bluff,
A man whom e'en his enemy
Would never call a muff.

These twain, for want of better names,
Sluther we'll call, and Slyum—
Now, gentle reader, pray don't try :
You can't identify 'em.

This worthy pair a client had,
Who, in his earlier days,
Had honest been, but, losing tone,
Fell into wicked ways ;

And straying far, and stumbling oft
O'er moral hill and hummock,
He came at last to filch a book,
To fill an empty stomach.

And this is how he did the deed
(Now, "gentle," don't you try it,
For though he took the book by guile,
He certainly did buy it) :

He wandered into Sluther's shop,
As in the days gone by,
Where many a goodly tome he'd bought
At prices fairly high ;

And after passing round the shelves,
As was his wont of yore,
He chose a volume, small but rare,
Worth shillings p'r'aps a score.

Then turning with abstracted air
To where poor Sluther stood,
He said, "You'll put it down to me,"
And Sluther said he would.

Their shop was long and low and dim,
The front was ruled by Sluther ;
While Slyum "kept the books" and dwelt
In darkness at the other.

Our villain pushed his wicked way,
Past connoisseur and gull,
To where old Slyum kept accounts ;
For Sluther's shop was full.

And there with conversation bland,
And specious balderdash,
He showed his book to Slyum, and—
He sold it him for cash !

If furtive sneaks, who help themselves
To books from stalls and boxes,
Are treated like the kites and crows,
What should be done with foxes ?

ELLIOT STOCK.



HONE'S EVERY-DAY BOOK.

WHEN wandering through some stately gal-
lery,
Where pictures, gleaned from various times and
lands,
Harvest the labours of the noblest hands
Trained by long toil to highest mastery,

We linger, greeting with a glad surprise
 The presence of so many well-known friends,
 Who each in turn for our reception lends
 A festival for mind and ears and eyes ;
 Yet as we, satiate, leave the kindly roof
 Of him who garnered for our pleasuring,
 We count the beauty but a little thing
 That spent and spread for our ingrate behoof.
 Good reader, when this well-filled book you close,
 Bless the deft hand that all its treasures chose.

ELLIOT STOCK.



COMPANIONS.

"A French writer (whom I love well) speaks of three kinds of companions, men, women and books."—SIR JOHN DAVYS.

WE have companions, comrade mine ;
 Jolly good fellows, tried and true,
 Are filling their cups with the Rhenish wine,
 And pledging each other, as I do you.
 Never a man in all the land
 But has, in his hour of need, a friend,
 Who stretches to him a helping hand,
 And stands by him to the bitter end.
 If not before, there is comfort then,
 In the strong companionship of men.

But better than that, old friend of mine,
 Is the love of woman, the life of life,
 Whether in maiden's eyes it shine,
 Or melts in the tender kiss of wife ;

A heart contented to feel, not know,
That finds in the other its sole delight ;
White hands that are loth to let us go,
The tenderness that is more than might !
On earth below, in heaven above,
Is there anything better than woman's love ?

I do not say so, companion mine,
For what, without it, would I be here ?
It lightens my troubles, like this good wine,
And, if I must weep, sheds tear for tear !
But books, old friends that are always new,
Of all good things that we know are best ;
They never forsake us, as others do,
And never disturb our inward rest.
Here is truth in a world of lies,
And all that in man is great and wise !

Better than men and women, friend,
That are dust, though dear in our joy and pain,
Are the books their cunning hands have penned,
For they depart, but the books remain ;
Through these they speak to us what was best
In the loving heart and the noble mind ;
All their royal souls possessed
Belongs for ever to all mankind !
When others fail him, the wise man looks
To the sure companionship of books.

R. H. STODDARD.



SONNET.

WITH A COPY OF "MADEMOISELLE DE MAUPIN."

THIS is the golden book of spirit and sense,
 The holy writ of beauty ; he that wrought
 Made it with dreams and faultless words and
 thought

That seeks and finds and loses in the dense
 Dim air of life that beauty's excellence
 Wherewith love makes one hour of life distraught,
 And all hours after follow and find not aught.

Here is that height of all love's eminence
 Where man may breathe but for a breathing space,
 And feel his soul burn as an altar-fire

To the unknown God of unachieved desire,
 And from the middle mystery of the place
 Watch lights that break, hear sounds as of a quire,
 But see not twice unveiled the veiled God's face.

A. C. SWINBURNE.



CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE.

CROWNED, girdled, garbed and shod with
 light and fire,

Son firstborn of the morning, sovereign star !

Soul nearest ours of all, that wert most far,

Most far off in the abysm of time, thy l re

Hung highest above the dawn-enkindled quire

When all ye sang together, all that are,

And all the starry songs behind thy car

Rang sequence, All our souls acclaim thee sire.

“If all the pens that ever poets held
Had fed the feeling of their masters’ thoughts,”
And as with rush of hurtling chariots
The flight of all their spirits were impelled
Toward one great end, thy glory—nay, not then
Not yet might’st thou be praised enough of men

A. C. SWINBURNE



ON LAMB'S SPECIMENS OF DRAMATIC
POETS.

I.

IF all the flowers of all the fields on earth
By wonder-working summer were made one,
Its fragrance were not sweeter in the sun,
Its treasure-house of leaves were not more worth
Than those wherefrom thy light of musing mirth
Shone, till each leaf whereon thy pens would run
Breathed life, and all its breath were benison.
Beloved beyond all names of English birth,
More dear than mightier memories ; gentlest name
That ever clothed itself with flower-sweet fame,
Or linked itself with loftiest names of old,
By right and might of loving ; I, that am
Less than the least of these among thy fold,
Give only thanks for them to thee, Charles Lamb.

II.

So many a year had borne its own bright bees
And slain them since thy honey-bees were hived,
John Day, in cells of flower-sweet verse, contrived
So well with craft of mouldering melodies,

Thy soul perchance in amaranth fields at ease
 Thought not to hear the sound on earth revived
 Of summer music from the spring derived
 When thy song sucked the flower of flowering trees.
 But thine was not the chance of every day :
 Time, after many a darkling hour, grew sunny,
 And light between the clouds ere sunset swam,
 Laughing, and kissed their darkness all away,
 When, touched and tasted and approved, thy honey
 Took subtler sweetness from the lips of Lamb.

A. C. SWINBURNE.



A BALLAD OF FRANÇOIS VILLON.

(PRINCE OF ALL BALLAD MAKERS).

BIRD of the bitter bright grey golden morn
 Scarce risen upon the dusk of dolorous years,
 First of us all and sweetest singer born
 Whose far shrill note the world of new men
 hears
 Cleave the cold shuddering shade as twilight
 clears ;
 When song new-born put off the old world's attire
 And felt its tune on her changed lips expire,
 Writ foremost on the roll of them that came
 Fresh girt for service of the latter lyre,
 Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

A Ballad of François Villon. 139

Alas the joy, the sorrow and the scorn,
That clothed thy life with hopes and sins and
fears,
And gave thee stone for bread and tares for corn,
And plume-plucked gaol-birds for thy starveling
peers
Till death clipped close their flight with shame-
ful shears ;
Till shifts came short and loves were hard to hire,
When lilt of song nor twitch of twangling wire
Could buy thee bread or kisses ; when light
fame
Spurned like a ball and haled through brake and
brier,
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn !
Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick
tears !
Poor perfect voice, most bright when most forlorn,
That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers
Like joy-bells crossed with death-knells in our
ears !
What far delight has cooled the fierce desire
That like some ravenous bird was strong to tire
On that frail flesh and soul consumed with flame,
But left more sweet than roses to respire
Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

ENVOI.

Prince of sweet songs made out of tears and fire,
A harlot was thy nurse, a god thy sire ;

Shame soiled thy song and song assoiled thy
 shame,
 But from thy feet now death has washed the mire.
 Love reads out first, as head of all our quire,
 Villon, our sad bad glad mad brother's name !

A. C. SWINBURNE.



ANONYMOUS PLAYS.

YE too, dim watchfires of some darkling hour,
 Whose fame forlorn time saves not nor
 proclaims
 Forever, but forgetfulness defames
 And darkness and the shadow of death devour,
 Lift up ye too your light, put forth your power,
 Let the far twilight feel your soft small flames
 And smile, albeit night name not even their
 names,
 Ghost by ghost passing, flower blown down on
 flower :
 That sweet-tongued shadow, like a star's that
 passed
 Singing, and light was from its darkness cast
 To paint the face of Painting fair with praise ; *
 And that wherein forefigured smiles the pure
 Fraternal face of Wordsworth's Elidure
 Between two child-faced masks of merrier days. †

* *Doctor Dodypol.*

† *Nobody and Somebody.*

MORE yet and more, and yet we mark not all ;
 The Warning fain to bid fair women heed
 Its hard brief note of deadly doom and deed ; *
 The verse that strewed too thick with flowers the hall
 Whence Nero watched his fiery festival ; †
 That iron page wherein men's eyes who read
 See, bruised and marred between two babes that
 bleed,
 A mad red-handed husband's martyr fall ; ‡
 The scene which crossed and streaked with mirth
 the strife
 Of Henry with his sons and witch-like wife ; §
 And that sweet pageant of the kindly fiend,
 Who, seeing three friends in spirit and heart made
 one,
 Crowned with good hap the true-love wiles he
 screened
 In the pleached lanes of pleasant Edmonton. ||

A. C. SWINBURNE.



THE LEGEND OF THE ODD VOLUMES.

I.

LONG ago, when such ventures but few under-
 took,
 Some one printed and published a capital book,
 But when all the copies were suitably bound,
 One copy was missed and could nowhere be found.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| * <i>A Warning for Fair Women.</i> | § <i>Look About You.</i> |
| † <i>The Tragedy of Nero.</i> | <i>The Merry Devil of Edmonton.</i> |
| ‡ <i>A Yorkshire Tragedy.</i> | |

Whether stolen or lost was a point never cleared,
 But the twenty-one volumes had all disappeared.
 Odd volumes turned up here and there now and
 then,
 But the once perfect sette never turned up again.
 Yet every odd volume, on stall or on shelf,
 Seemed somehow or other to speak for itself, —
 “ As a single Odd Volume I’m matchless, but
 yet
 The whole twenty-one of us perfect a sette ! ”

II.

The work, cyclopædic in plan, was designed
 To embrace every subject then known to mankind ;
 Thus one volume treated of working appliances,
 While another was wholly devoted to sciences.
 Statistics and politics, chemistry, history,
 Sport, poetry, fiction, jests, magic, and mystery.
 Law, heraldry, medicine, music, and art,—
 Some filled a whole volume, some only a part.
 Yet each of these volumes, on stall or on shelf,
 Seemed somehow or other to speak for itself,—
 “ As a single Odd Volume I’m matchless, but
 yet
 The whole twenty-one of us perfect a sette ! ”

III.

These odd volumes were scattered in all sorts of
 places,
 In cupboards and cabinets, boxes and cases,

Legend of the Odd Volumes. 143

Some were seen in a shop, and some more on a
stall,

And one simply filled up a hole in a wall.

One lay in a lumber chest, out in a shed,

While another was stowed away under a bed.

If some had been kept with a fair share of care,

Some others were certainly worse for hard wear.

Yet every odd volume, on stall or on shelf,

Seemed somehow or other to speak for itself,—

“As a single Odd Volume I’m matchless, but
yet

The whole twenty-one of us perfect a sette !”

IV.

Thus year after year they continued to lie,

Father Time very stupidly passing them by,

And seeming indifferent what might become of
them,

Although his own imprint was plain upon some of
them ;

Until one day it struck him that if he could
bring

All the volumes together ’twould be a good thing.

So he started collecting, and still he keeps on,

And the sette will be certainly made up anon.

For every odd volume, on stall or on shelf,

Seemed somehow or other to speak for itself,—

“As a single Odd Volume I’m matchless, but
yet

The whole twenty-one of us perfect a sette !”

v.

Even now Father Time looks with something like
 pride
 At his sixteen Odd Volumes all ranged side by side ;
 But still hurries on lest he seem to neglect
 Three more he is now on his way to collect.
 His task, it is plain, will be very soon done,
 And Time have assembled the whole twenty-one ;
 Odd volumes no more when together are met
 The twenty-one volumes which perfect the sette.

But the perfected sette won't be laid on the
 shelf ;

Each volume will somehow still speak for
 itself,—

“ When together we perfect a Sette, if you will,
 But apart each is matchless—an Odd Volume
 still ! ”

W. M. THOMPSON.

DEC. 1878.



RELIGIO MEDICI.

I.

A BOOK ? A solemn Temple of the Mind,
 Dim with sweet smoke, where by the altar
 dwells
 Music, sole priestess ; she who in sad shells
 Murmurs the rune God whispered to the wind
 Breathed from His throne, which stars and spirit
 impels.

II.

What sage dreams in this vestibule of heaven ?
Seer, mystic, saint,—or wandering Earth's lost
child.
Babbling quaint heresies whereat God smiled
Ere Peter wept, or the thief died forgiven :
Old faith with elder fears half-reconciled ?

III.

Rich-voiced Chaldean, whose majestic speech,
“Far above singing,” wakes the inward ear,
And haunts, with ancient anthems grave and
clear,
The heart's grey cloister, thy ecstatic reach
Drew some rare splendour from the empyreal
sphere.

IV.

Ah ! might one grow the Titian of a thought,
The Handel of a soul's most deep desire,
In words like thine, whose golden wings aspire,
Till, purged and flaming in the sun they sought,
They “live immortal in the arms of fire.”

JOHN TODHUNTER



IN AN OLD LIBRARY.

I.

HERE the still air
Broods over drowsy nooks
Of ancient learning : one is 'ware,
As in a mystic aisle

Of lingering incense, of the balm of books.
So nard from cerecloths of Egyptian kings
Solemnised once the sepulchres of Nile.

II.

Here quietness,
A ghostly presence, dwells
Among rich tombs ; here doth possess
With an ecstatic dread
The intruder seeking old-world oracles
In books, centuries of books, centuries of tombs
That hold the spirits of the crownèd dead.

III.

Go softly ! Here
Sleep fair embalméd souls
In piled-up monuments, in their sere
And blazoned robes of fame,
Conquerors of Time. Whisper to these grey
scrolls,
Call Poet, Sage, Romancer, Chronicler,
And every one will answer to his name.

IV.

Man walks the earth
The quintessence of dust :
Books, from the ashes of his mirth
Madness and sorrow, seem
To draw the elixir of some rarer gust ;
Or, like the Stone of Alchemy, transmute
Life's cheating dross to golden truth of dream.

JOHN TODHUNTER.

DEAD POETS.

WHERE be they who once would sing,
 Poets passed from wood and dale ?
 Faintly, now, we touch the string,
 Faithless, now, we seek the Grail :
 Shakespeare, Spenser, nought avail,
 Herrick, England's Oberon,
 Sidney, smitten through his mail,
 Souls of Poets dead and gone !
 Ronsard's Roses blossoming
 Long are faded, long are frail ;
 Gathered to the heart of Spring
 He that sung the breezy flail.*
 Ah ! could prayer at all prevail,
 These should shine where once they shone,
 These should 'scape the shadowy pale—
 Souls of Poets dead and gone !
 What clear air knows Dante's wing ?
 What new seas doth Homer sail ?
 By what waters wandering
 Tells Theocritus his tale ?
 Still, when cries the Nightingale,
 Singing, sobbing, on and on,
 Her brown feathers seem to veil
 Souls of Poets dead and gone.
 Charon, when my ghost doth hail
 O'er Cocytus' waters wan,
 Land me where no storms assail
 Souls of Poets dead and gone.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.

* Joachim du Bellay.

TO HERODOTUS.

FAR-TRAVELLED coaster of the midland
seas,

What marvels did those curious eyes behold !
Winged snakes, and carven labyrinths of old ;
The emerald column raised to Heracles ;
King Perseus' shrine upon the Chemmian leas ;
Four-footed fishes, decked with gems and gold :
But thou didst leave some secrets yet untold,
And veiled the dread Osirian mysteries.

And now the golden asphodels among
Thy footsteps fare, and to the lordly dead
Thou tellest all the stories left unsaid
Of secret rites and runes forgotten long,
Of that dark folk who ate the Lotus-bread
And sang the melancholy Linus-song.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.



OMAR KHAYYAM.

SAYER of sooth, and Searcher of dim skies !
Lover of Song, and Sun, and Summer tide,
For whom so many roses bloomed and died ;
Tender Interpreter, most sadly wise,
Of earth's dumb, inarticulated cries !
Time's self cannot estrange us, nor divide.
Thy hand still beckons from the garden-side,
Through green vine-garlands, when the Winter dies.

Thy calm lips smile on us, thine eyes are wet ;
The nightingale's full song sobs all through thine,
And thine in hers,—part human, part divine !
Among the deathless gods thy place is set,
All wise, but drowsy with Life's mingled Wine,
Laughter and Learning, Passion and Regret.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.



OLD BOOKS, FRESH FLOWERS.

(TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF JOSEPH BAULMIER.)

ALONE, at home, I dwell, content and free :
The soft May sun comes with his greeting
fair ;

And, like a lute, my heart thrills tremblingly,
By the Spring's fingers touched to some sweet air.
Blessed be Thou, my God, who from my face
Tak'st the pale cast of thought that weary lowers !
My chamber walls—my narrow window space
Hold all most dear to me—old books, fresh
flowers.

Those trusty friends, that faithful company—
My books—say, “ Long his slumbers, and we
wait ! ”

But my flowers murmur, as they look on me,
“ Nay, never chide him, for he watched so late ! ”
Brethren and sisters, these of mine ! my room
Shines fair as with the light of Eden's bowers ;
The Louvre is not worth my walls abloom
With all most dear to me—old books, fresh
flowers.

Beside your shelves I know not weariness,
My silent-speaking books ! so kind and wise ;
And fairer seems your yellowed parchment dress
Than gay morocco, to my loving eyes.
Dear blossoms, of the humble hermit's choice,
In sweetest communing what joys are ours !
To you I listen, and with you rejoice ;
For all I love is here—old books, fresh flowers.

Men are unlovely, but their works are fair—
Ay, men are evil, but their works are good :
The clay hath perished, and the soul laid bare
Shines from their books in heavenly solitude.
Light on each slender stem pure blossoms rest,
Like angel envoys of the Heavenly powers ;
Of all earth's maidens these are first and best,
And all I love is here—old books, fresh flowers.

A double harvest crowns my granary :
From all light loves and joys my soul takes flight ;
My books are blossoms, and their bee am I,
And God's own volumes are my blossoms bright.
These and no other bosom friends are mine ;
With them I pass my best, my calmest hours ;
These only lead me to the light Divine,
And all I love is here : old books, fresh flowers.

My books are tombs where wit and wisdom sleep,
Stored full with treasure of the long ago ;
My tender buds, that dew of spring-tide steep,
Like shining mirrors of the future show.

The present is so sad ! . . . this dark to-day
Like skies with thunder charged above us lowers :
Ah ! of the past—the future—speak alway,
Tell me of naught but these . . . old books,
fresh flowers.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.



BETTY BARNES, THE BOOK-BURNER.

WHERE is that baleful maid
Who Shakspeare's quartos shred ?
Whose slow diurnal raid
The flames with *Stephen* fed ?
Where is *Duke Humphry* sped ?
Where is the *Henries'* book ?
They are all vanishèd
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

And now her ghost, dismayed,
In woful ways doth tread—
(Though once the grieving shade
Sir Walter visited)—
Where culprits sore bestead,
In dank or fiery nook,
Repent there deeds of dread
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

There Bagford's evil trade
Is duly punishèd ;
There fierce the flames have played
Round Caliph Omar's head ;

The biblioclastic dead
Have diverse pains to brook,
'Mid rats and rainpools led
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

Caxton ! be comforted,
For those who wronged thee—look ;
They break affliction's bread
With Betty Barnes the Cook.

GRAHAM R. TOMSON.



BALLAD : BEFORE MY BOOKSHELVES.

NOW that the swallow again we see,
Now daisy-burthened is every mead
And burthened the air with bird-minstrelsy—
What book shall I take in my nook to read ?
Will a huge folio serve my need
From yonder musty and slumberous row ?
All the May-morn on *him* shall I feed—
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio ?

Stay ! if I took him, asleep should I be
In a moment, and even the birds would speed
To their nests, quick-stinting their melody
As though, all-timeless, dark night were freed.
Pass on ! Yon history ! Do you plead
For a hearing ? Mighty of voice, I trow !
Shall I thrive on some old-world blood-bright
deed,
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio ?

The sweet heaven-showers for the daisied lea
 Are better than showers from heroes that bleed ;
 And the shriek of the clarion would slay the glee
 Of the birds, that love but the shepherd's reed—
 Ah ! and the lute of the singer ! Have heed !
 Here are the poets, with leaves that glow
 Lovelier than lindens' : take this, indeed ?—
Or the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio !

ENVOI.

Birds, I am coming. Do you proceed
 With your lyrics ; a lovelier song I know.
 Look, here is a *Swinburne*, and here—base greed !
Are the rose-bright tales of Boccaccio !

NELSON RICH TYERMAN.



TO MY PAPER-KNIFE.

THOU art old, my Paperknife, old and dented !
 Yet hast served me well, since in Eighteen-
 sev'nty
 I first saw thee, left in the railway-carriage,
 Left by a maiden,
 Who, beside her mother demurely seated,
 Glanced in turn at *Telegraph*, *Times* and *Stan-*
dard,
 Or, above the *Telegraph*, *Times* or *Standard*,
 Let a look wander
 Shyly forth 'neath eyelashes long and raven.

She, the unknown, alighted, but thee she left
there,

Paperknife ! Since then thou hast cut the leaves of
Homer and Virgil,
Lycophron, Sidonius Apollinaris,
Rhodian Apollonius, Egyptian Hermes,
Hegel and the twain Metamorphosistae,
Darwin and Ovid.

R. J. WALKER.



FOR THE SHELLEY CENTENARY.

IN Christ's own town did fools of old condemn
A sinless maid to burn in felon's fire ;
She looked above : she spake from out the pyre
To skies that made a star for Bethlehem,
When lo ! the flames touching her garment's hem
Blossomed to roses—warbled like a lyre—
Made every fagot-twigg a scented brier,
And crowned her with a rose-bud diadem.*

Brothers in Shelley, we this morn are strong :
Our Heart of Hearts hath conquered—con-
quered those
Once fain to work the world and Shelley wrong :
Their pyre of hate now bourgeons with the rose :
Their every fagot, now a sweet-brier, throws
Love's breath upon the breeze of Shelley's song.

THEODORE WATTS.

* See the story of the Maid of Bethlehem in Sir John
Mandeville's Travels.

COLERIDGE.

I SEE thee pine like her in golden story
 Who, in her prison, woke and saw, one day,
 The gates thrown open—saw the sunbeams play,
 With only a web 'tween her and summer's glory ;
 Who, when that web—so frail, so transitory
 It broke before her breath—had fallen away,
 Saw other webs and others rise for aye
 Which kept her prisoned till her hair was hoary.

Those songs half-sung that yet were all-divine—
 That woke Romance, the queen, to reign afresh—
 Had been but preludes from that lyre of thine,
 Could thy rare spirit's wings have pierced the
 mesh
 Spun by the wizard who compels the flesh,
 But lets the poet see how heav'n can shine.

THEODORE WATTS.



THE DEATH OF MARLOWE.

'TIS Marlowe falls ! That last lunge rent
 asunder
 Our lyre of spirit and flesh, wild Marlowe's life,
 Whose chords seemed strung by earth and heav'n
 at strife,
 Yet ever strung to beauty above or under !
 Heav'n kens of Man, but still the stars can blunder
 If Fate's hand guided yonder villain's knife
 Through that rare brain, so teeming, daring, rife
 With all that makes us sing,—our love and wonder.

Or was it Chance?—

Shakespeare—who art supreme
O'er man and men, yet sharest Marlowe's sight
To pierce the clouds that hide the inhuman
height

Where man and men and gods and all that seem
Are Nature's mutterings in her changeful dream—
Come, read the runes these bloody streamlets write!

THEODORE WATTS.



TO MY WIFE: WITH A COPY OF MY
POEMS.

I CAN write no stately proem
As a prelude to my lay;
From a poet to a poem
I would dare to say.

For if of these fallen petals
One to you seem fair,
Love will waft it till it settles
On your hair.

And when wind and winter harden
All the loveless land,
It will whisper of the garden,
You will understand.

OSCAR WILDE.

WITH A COPY OF "THE HOUSE OF
POMEGRANATES."

G O, little book,
To him who, on a lute with horns of pearl,
Sang of the white feet of the Golden Girl :
And bid him look
Into thy pages : it may hap that he
May find that golden maidens dance through thee.
OSCAR WILDE.



MY BOOKS.

1.

THE winter evening closes blank and stern,
The flickering fire illumines with dancing light
My narrow chamber walls, and as the night
Draws on to morn, my lamp half down I turn.
Amid the shadows dimly I discern
My books, dumb comrades, gay and erudite,
From folios brown to pamphlets thin and white,
Well nigh the only friends from whom I learn.
Full half of them would be by busy men
Rejected with a smile, but I—I move
Too seldom down the volumes that improve.
Give me the work of a forgotten pen,
Wild tales of Prester John or of the Cham,
Or emblem quaintnesses from Amsterdam.

II.

Oh, happy he who, weary of the sound
 Of throbbing life, can shut his study door,
 Like Heinsius, on it all, to find a store
 Of peace that elsewhere is never found !
 Such happiness is mine, when all around
 My dear dumb friends in groups of three or four
 Command my soul to linger on the shore
 Of those fair realms where they reign monarchs
 crowned.
 To-day the strivings of the world are nought,
 For I am in a land that glows with God,
 And I am in a path by angels trod.
 Dost ask what book creates such heavenly thought ?
 Then know that I with Dante soar afar,
 'Till earth shrinks slowly to a tiny star.

J. WILLIAMS.



WITH FITZGERALD'S "OMAR KHAYYAM."

EIGHT centuries unheeded by the West !
 Now loved within our hearts ; whose daily
 strait
 Is still to war with wavering unrest,
 To ask in vain, for aye importunate,
 The ceaseless "WHY" ? whereof we ever wait
 The answering "BECAUSE," which ringing
 true
 Would solve the mystery of Life and Fate.
 Omar ! the peace you sought we find in you.

Fitzgerald's "Omar Khayyam." 159

The fabled Paradise wherein the blest
Lie lotus-eating, lulled in languorous state,
Measured by later reasonable test
Seems but at best a doubtful opiate.
Life is but labour, always to create
New aims to strive for, and new things to do.
Could Heaven itself the stress of life abate?
Omar ! the peace you sought we find in you.

Incurious, we cease the hopeless quest,
For nobler he who thus can subjugate
His reckless will, than he with fears opprest,
Who cries amid his doubts, "Alláh is great!"
"*Each his own heaven or hell!*" why hesitate?
To-day is ours, to-morrow keeps the clue
To the great secret, still inviolate.
Omar ! the peace you sought we find in you.

Shall Fate or we cry to Life's game, "check-mate"!
Nay, wise men draw it, fools defeat pursue;
Unconquered, though unconquering, as we wait.
Omar ! the peace you sought we find in you.

G. W.



"KEATS TOOK SNUFF."

"Keats took snuff. . . . It has been established by the worthy editorial research of Mr. Buxton Forman."

SO "Keats took snuff"? A few more years,
When we are dead and famous—eh?
Will they record our pipes and beers,
And if we smoked cigars or clay?
Or will the world cry "Quantum suff."
To tattle such as "Keats took snuff"?

Perhaps some chronicler would wish
To know what whisky we preferred,
And if we ever dined on fish,
Or only took the joint and bird?
Such facts are quite as worthy stuff,
Good chronicler, as "Keats took snuff."

You answer: "But, if you were Keats—"
Tut! never mind your buts and ifs.
Of little men record their meats,
Their drinks, their troubles and their tiffs.
Of the great dead there's gold enough
To spare us such as "Keats took snuff."

Well, go your ways, you little folk,
Who polish up the great folks' lives;
Record the follies that they spoke,
And paint their squabbles with their wives.
Somewhere, if ever ghosts be gruff,
I trust some Keats will "give you snuff."

OLD BOOKS.

I MUST confess I love old books !
 The dearest, too, perhaps most dearly ;
 Thick, clumsy tomes, of antique looks,
 In pigskin covers fashioned queerly.

Clasped, chained, or thonged, stamped quaintly
 too,
 With figures wondrous strange, or holy
 Men and women, and cherubs, few
 Might well from owls distinguish duly.

I love black-letter books that saw
 The light of day at least three hundred
 Long years ago ; and look with awe
 On works that live, so often plundered.

I love the sacred dust the more
 It clings to ancient lore, enshrining
 Thoughts of the dead, renowned of yore,
 Embalmed in books, for age declining.

Fit solace, food, and friends more sure,
 To have around one, always handy,
 When sinking spirits find no cure
 In news, election brawls, or brandy.

In these old books, more soothing far
 Than Balm of Gilead or Nepenthè,
 I seek an antidote for care—
 Of which most men indeed have plenty.

"Five hundred times at least," I've said—
My wife assures me—"I would never
Buy more old books;" yet lists are made,
And shelves are lumbered more than ever.

Ah! that our wives could only see
How well the money is invested
In these old books, which seem to be
By them, alas! so much detested.

There's nothing hath enduring youth,
Eternal newness, strength unfailing,
Except old books, old friends, old truth,
That's ever battling—still prevailing.

'Tis better in the past to live
Than grovel in the present vilely,
In clubs, and cliques, where placemen hive,
And faction hums, and dolts rank highly.

To be enlightened, counselled, led,
By master minds of former ages,
Come to old books—consult the dead—
Commune with silent saints and sages.

Leave me, ye gods! to my old books—
Polemics yield to sects that wrangle—
Vile "parish politics" to folks
Who love to squabble, scheme, and jangle.

Dearly beloved old pigskin tomes!
Of dingy hue—old bookish darlings!
Oh, cluster ever round my rooms,
And banish strifes, disputes, and snarlings

TO A CHINA COLLECTOR.

YOU'RE proud of your fine old china,
 I'm proud of my volumes rare ;
 Some people may call us crazy,
 But what do you and I care ?
 Through the quaint little shops and gloomy,
 Where curious trifles are sold,
 In the depths of ancient cities
 You'll hunt till you're grey and old.

And the bookshelves I will ransack
 In many a grimy store ;
 Yes, I as a keen detective
 Will, down from roof to floor,
 Haul folios huge and stately,
 Written in bygone ages
 By minstrels, who as they penn'd love-lays
 Dropped tears on the parchment pages.

And I'll longingly look for the miniatures,
 Those dear little dainty books,
 Prettily deck'd in purple and gold,
 That one reads in the grass-green nooks.
 I mean the kind that are richly stored
 With beautiful, pure romances,
 And the mystical song of the gales and seas
 That a sorrowful heart entrances.



THE LITERARY NOVELTY.

HERE'S to the novel without any plot,
Which brings to the mind calm delight :
The scholarly novel that interests not,
But structurally still is all right.
Then send the rich sterilised water around,
Till each brimming glass doth run o'er ;
We'll drink to the tale in which no plot is found
Till we can't drink another drop more !

Dickens, and Thackeray, and Sir Walter Scott,
And others too numerous to mention,
Each one of them used a most palpable plot
As a cheap way to hold the attention :
We know now the plot to be thoroughly wrong,
Analysis these fellows lacked ;
So drink to the hope that it may not be long
Till readers shall find out this fact !

The deadly romance, that dire pitfall of youth,
Oh, give me the photograph dear,
For I would have fiction as truthful as truth,
And never a smile or a tear.
On the plain commonplace should the novelist
dwell,
The common and everyday topic ;
In a way realistic he even should tell
Of the beautiful point microscopic.

Then here's to the utterly tasteless and tame,
The sleepy, the vapid, the flat ;
And here's to each author who builds us the same
With a kodak concealed in his hat !

Then we'll drink, as the sterilised waters go
round,
To the novel that fosters a snore ;
To the plotless, the dull, but with principle sound,
Till we can't drink another drop more.



AFTER MANY DAYS.

“ I REALLY am obliged to you for bringing
back my book,
It moves me much to look whereon I thought no
more to look ;
It minds me of the early time when it was lent to
you,
When life was young and hope was fair, and this
old book was new.
“ How well does memory recall the gilt that on it
shone
The day I saw it, coveted, and bought it for my
own ;
And vividly I recollect you called around that day,
Admired it, then borrowed it, and carried it away !
“ And now it comes to me again across the lapse
of time,
Wearing the somewhat battered look of those
beyond their prime.
Old book, you need a rest—but ere you're laid
upon the shelf,
Just try and hang together till I read you through
myself.”

THE YOUNG WIFE'S PLAINT.

NAY, seems it not most wondrous queer
That he should love to tarry here ;
Prefer this "den" to boudoir nest
Where downy pillows coax to rest,
Chaise-longue and Turkish cigarette ?
A stranger compound ne'er was met
Than this same creature man, I ween.
What's this dull calf to velvet sheen ?
Who dares assert that this pert minx
On yellow page in dingy inks
Is half so fair as I am, see !
What woman would not angry be
With man who turns from living charms
To worship some dead beauty's arms ?
Why should he care of smiles to read
When mine so sweet are his indeed ?
What's Maintenon or this L'Enclos
Or Gwynn to him, I'd like to know ?
What stupid fad, what silly rage
To *love* such trash of bygone age !
Why, as I live, these letters mean
Just fifteen hundred seventeen.
Nay, 'tis a shame to buy such stuff
When nice new books are cheap enough !
Knew I how soon I'd be forgot
I ne'er had wedded him, God wot.
Vile, musty books, in dead skins bound—
Faugh, what an odour lingers round !
'Tis shameful taste, indeed it is ;
But hear my vow, ye loves of his,

In spite of all your dingy looks—
Apologies for decent books—
I'll win him back, ye mildewed crew,
I'll make him think I love you too!



OLD AND NEW.

OLD friends are best, the poets sing.
No others are so staunch and true.
New friends in trouble will not cling
As closely as the old friends do.

Old books are best without a doubt.
Their charms can never fail to win.
New books, however bright without,
Have not their power to please within.

Old wines are best, as all aver,
And often are their praises sung.
They're rich and rare, have power to stir
The pulses of both old and young.

Friends, wine and books have charms to please
When age its ivy round them curls ;
But we've no use for such as these :
Old jokes, old clothes, old ballet girls.



THE FUTURE OF THE CLASSICS.

NO longer, O scholars, shall Plautus
Be taught us.
No more shall professors be partial
To Martial.
No ninny
Will stop playing "shinney"
For Pliny.
Not even the veriest Mexican Greaser
Will stop to read Cæsar.
No true son of Erin will leave his potato
To list to the love-lore of Ovid or Plato.
Old Homer,
That hapless old roamer,
Will ne'er find rest 'neath collegiate dome or
Anywhere else. As to Seneca,
Any cur
Safely may snub him, or urge ill
Effects from the reading of Virgil.
Cornelius Nepos
Won't keep us
Much longer from pleasure's light errands—
Nor Terence.
The irreverent now may all scoff in ease
At the shade of poor old Aristophanes.
And moderns it now doth behoove in all
Ways to despise poor old Juvenal ;
And to chivvy
Livy.
The class-room hereafter will miss a row
Of eager young students of Cicero.

The 'longshore man—yes, and the dock-rat, he's
Down upon Socrates.
And what'll

Induce us to read Aristotle?
We shall fail in
Our duty to Galen.

No tutor henceforward shall rack us
To construe old Horatius Flaccus.
We have but a wretched opinion
Of Mr. Justinian.

In our classical pabulum mix we no wee sop
Of Æsop.

Our balance of intellect asks for no ballast
From Sallust.

With feminine scorn no fair Vassar-bred lass at us
Shall smile if we own that we cannot read Tacitus.
No admirer shall ever now wreathe with begonias
The bust of Suetonius.

And so, if you follow me,
We'll have to cut Ptolemy.

Besides, it would just be considered facetious
To look at Lucretius.

And you can
Not go in society if you read Lucan.
And we cannot have any fun
Out of Xenophon.



TO M—, WITH A COPY OF "THE
PETERKIN PAPERS."

A BOSTON girl prefers a set of volumes that
are uniform,
In Syriac, Chaldeaic, Sanskrit, Arabic, or cunei-
form,

For these will test her palæontological ability,
And not insult her culture by superfluous facility.
She loves a scientific pedant, or, to use a synonym,
A specimen with printed name and label fair to pin
on him.

Alas! I fear she will despise a book without a
mystery,

That never once alludes to Art or Mediæval
History ;

But as she is compelled each day to recognise and
meet her kin,

I trust she will accept at least this tale of Mrs.
Peterkin.



THE BOOKWORM'S STORY.

THRO' Papyrus with wisdom stored
In ancient days my way I bored ;
Ah, mem'ry of that far-off time,
And succulence of Nilus' slime !
'Twas nature's paper bred my kind
And nurs'd fat worms of rev'rent mind !

The giants we before the flood,
With reptiles bred in Egypt's mud !—
Lost kindred mine that went to ash
With Alexandria's lore and trash.
You'd scarce believe the diet strange
Thro' which the Bookworm now must range.
Cotton paper was plaguy stuff,
And linen rag was bad enough ;
But things have come to such a pass
That paper's made of straw and grass !
Esparto, ramie, young bamboo,
All these and more I've eaten thro' !—
But soft ; for now I must relate
Th' apotheosis of my fate :
Dyspeptic 'mid these modern books,
I sought old haunts and shady nooks,
Intent on ancient tomes forgot
That oft had been knocked down by lot ;
But mov'd—by what I cannot tell—
Unless its most unusual smell—
I tried a book of goodly size,
The hardest it of all my tries !
Away I bored, but I was floored,
Ye Gods ! the thing was made of *board*.
Yes, *wood* must now their paper give—
Stuff that ye may not eat, and live !
In fearful pain I lay me down,
And dreamt as people do who drown :

I dreamt of Egypt's sunny clime,
The Bookworm's ancient halcyon time.

Of modern ink the first time quaffed,
And once more rued the fiery draught.
This strange admixture seems to be
Much like the mortal's *eau-de-vie* ;
It makes one gay and feel so queer,
I oft have crow'd like chanticleer !
Once more 'mid cobwebs, dry-rot, dust,
I bored thro' Gutenberg and Fust.

On Caxton fed and Pynson, too,
And many an Elzevir drilled thro' ;
So dreaming, I quite vainly tried
To rouse myself—I nearly died !
For SOMETHING held me in its thrall
That made me grow both stout and tall !
Then I awoke, and with a shock—
It was the hand of ELLIOT STOCK ;
I rubb'd my eyes and gaz'd around,
Books lin'd the walls from ceil to ground.
Thro' many I had bor'd my way !
You'll scarce believe me when I say
The knowledge I had eaten thro'
Straight to my brain now upward flew !
New life and purpose thro' me ran—
I found myself a living man !
STOCK moved his hand, and, smiling, said,
“ Interpret now the mighty dead !
The world we live in disbelieves
In ancient books and yellow leaves :
Arise ! unlock the BOOKWORM's store,
And tell us of the books of yore ! ”

He gave me paper, quills, and ink,
While I could only stare and blink ;
Command and will were in his eye,
As he resum'd, without reply :
“ Once foe of books, as friend now live
To all who need, good book-lore give ;
Then you we'll hail as chief book-lover,
And place your portrait on the cover.’

So here THE BOOKWORM toiling spins,
To expiate his many sins.



THE NEW LEARNING.

ON Psychical Phenomena she spoke out with
decision

About the Ancient Mystics and the modern ones
as well ;

She discussed the Stellar Theory and the Tripartite
Division,

And the character of Shelley, and the Theo-
sophic Smell.

Anon she touched on Politics, on Egypt's vanished
splendours,

On Aryans, Euripides, and Rousseau's moral
tone ;

She quoted scraps of German, using freedom in
her genders,

And she mentioned Renan's latest with an accent
all her own.

I listened and I marvelled, for I've scholars known
in plenty

Who've struggled all a long life through to
master one domain,

And here I found a maiden fond of dancing, pretty,
twenty,

Whose province was all learning, and who found
it smooth and plain.

I loved her, and to love her was a liberal education ;
I shyly dared to ask her how I might grow wise
as she.

I was but a humble Wrangler, so I spoke with
trepidation :

She marked it, and she sweetly smiled and thus
encouraged me :

“ Oh, the matter's very simple ! You have but to
do as I did :

Go and hear extension lecturers, peruse the
monthly *Stead* ;

Join a Furnivall Society or two, by them be guided,
Of proper names and tendencies repeat all you
hear said.

“ Two lectures on the Cosmic Soul and three on
Man's Relations,

One on Dramatic Genius in England, Greece
and Rome,

A Tudor Exhibition and a Story of the Nations,
With a visit paid to Stratford or the Robert
Elsmere home,

“ Will make you almost perfect in the ways of the
New Learning,
That teaches us to talk of things we scarcely
know by name ;
But you mustn't waste your time on books, like
persons undiscerning,
Except about the washing bills and sins of men
of fame.

“ ‘ Browning ? Read him ? ’ I've not read him,
but I've heard a well-known critic
Give his views about ‘ Sordello ’ to the Ladies'
Culture Classes ;
And a magic-lantern picture at last Tuesday's
Analytic,
Showed the meeting 'twixt the lover and the wife
in ‘ Pippa Passes. ’

“ Now try this plan, and quickly 'mid the wisdom
of the ages,
You'll learn the true enjoyment that the love of
culture brings,
Find our Being's real inwardness before you in the
pages
Of the Shilling Oxford Primer on the Origin of
Things.”

From the “ St. James' Gazette.”



TO MY BOOKS.

WITH unaffected gratitude I gaze
 Around upon those silent sons of thought,
 From time's far depths and far-off regions brought;
 Ready with many tongues and lore and lays
 To minister to my capricious days!
 Chambers with golden sentences enwrought,
 They open liberal-hearted soon as sought,
 Nor claim nor heed my inefficient praise.
 Oh, kind companions! My mentors true,
 My playmates, minstrels, mortal and divine!
 I think he would die happier who knew
 His thoughts, deposited in some small shrine
 Like yours, should find a resting-place by you,
 There with undying light, though faint, to shine.

From "The Afterglow."

A PLEA FOR THE BURIAL OF PALEY,
DECEASED.

A NEW "SONNET DEDICATED TO LIBERTY."

PALEY, thou shouldst be buried at this hour;
 Thou hast been longtime dead, yet still the
 blight
 Of thy chill touch lies on the Infinite,
 With'ring it up t' the size and shape of our
 Vain finite minds. Oh that we had the power
 To bury thee deep in oblivion's sure
 Unechoing vault! that Faith, fair, free and pure

Might grow, undwarfed by memory of thy sour
And soul-less wranglings at the tomb of Christ ;
Thy calm dissection of the living hearts
Of martyr, prophet, and evangelist,
Thy worldly wisdom, which with curious arts
Of biassed logic has so perfectly
Embalmed a murdered Christianity.

"CAMBRIDGE REVIEW."

"READING."

MASTER.

SCHOLAR, thy books were all untouched to-
day,
The night, no candle in thy rooms was burning ;
I fear thou treadest sluggishly the way
That leads to learning.

SCHOLAR.

Master, the sun is shining in the skies,
My books, forgive me, how can I be heeding ?
Upon the woods the autumn glory lies—
Yet I was reading.

MASTER.

Scholar, above us I can see no sun :
I see no glory where the leaves are falling :
Scholar, thy reading waits thee to be done ;
The Schools are calling.

SCHOLAR.

Master, a way there is thou hast not guessed ;
All wandering from books, is not receding ;
For now I live, leave thou to me the rest—
I have been reading.

Of Life not Aristotle holds the keys ;
Kant cannot heal the heart that lies a-bleeding ;
Nature hath spread her book beneath the trees—
I have been reading.

Love walked beside me—prate thou not of books—
One fairer far than any sage was leading
My footsteps, master mine, and in her looks
I have been reading.

“ OXFORD MAGAZINE.”

IN A LIBRARY.

TREAD softly here, as ye would tread
In presence of the honoured dead,
With reverent step and low-bowed head.

Speak low—as low as ye would speak
Before some saint of grandeur meek
Whose favour ye would humbly seek.

Within these walls the very air
Seems weighted with a fragrance rare,
Like incense burned at evening prayer.

Here may we sit and converse hold
With those whose names in ages old
Were in the book of fame enrolled.

Here under poet's power intense
We leave the world of sound and sense,
Where mortals strive with problems dense,

And mount to realms where fancy, free,
Above our poor humanity,
Roams in a joyous ecstasy.

Or if through history's maze we tread,
The hero, patriot, long since dead,
Whose great heart for his country bled,

Seems once again to work and fight
In superstition's darkest night
For God, his fellows, and the right.

Enough ! mere words can never tell
The influence of the grateful spell
Which seems among these books to dwell.

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